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ATLANTIC ARGUMENT

ON both sides of the Atlantic strenuous efforts are being made to suggest that the acute dangers which now threaten our economy are due to British Socialism. In Washington, Sir Stafford Cripps is freely denounced as an Anglican Schacht who is trying to bolster up a bankrupt economy by discriminatory trading and a skilful exploitation of the blackmail which a big debtor always can employ against his creditors. It is argued by angry Senators that this sort of National Socialist planning is wrecking Western Union and is in flagrant violation of the terms of the American Loan, the Charter of the International Trade Organisation and the purposes of Marshall Aid.

Nearer home, Tory spokesmen, who seem to believe that it is high treason to abuse any country except their own, are providing plenty of ammunition for our Congressional opponents. Though their declared adherence to Imperial Preference makes them unable to welcome American demands for complete multilateralism, they are eager to suggest that the real reason for the failure of our export drive in the dollar countries is the inability of the British exporter to cut his costs owing to "wild extravagance of Government spending" and "the complete failure of nationalisation." British Socialism, they argue, is undermining the confidence of foreign countries in British stability. Though they dare not say so openly, the financial pundits of the Tory Party believe that the right policy for Britain is to deflate ruthlessly at the cost of cuts in the social services and heavy unemployment. As they disclosed last week, in the course of the debate on the Finance Bill, what they really want is another May Committee, another 1931 crisis and another National Government which this time will devalue the pound after pledging itself against devaluation. Rumours that this may be the ultimate outcome explain the recent slump on the Stock Exchange, engineered partly to embarrass the Government and partly as a reinsurance against the expected surrender of the Chancellor to the American demand for devaluation.

These expectations are almost certainly doomed to disappointment. If Sir Stafford is intellectually ruthless in exposing the illusions of his own supporters, he is equally contemptuous of the illusions prevalent in the City of London and on Capitol Hill. He is certainly not prepared, as an appeasing gesture to the least reputable or responsible group in the American legislature, to conceal the fact that the difficulties in which we find ourselves are primarily due to the wilfulness of Congress. It is its abject failure to counter the American slump which is the prime cause of our export difficulties and the drain on our gold reserves. In the I.T.O. Charter, the American Congress solemnly pledged itself not to adopt policies which lead to unemployment. This pledge has been violated time after time since last November, as spokesmen of the American Trade Unions are constantly pointing out. By obstructing the Fair Deal Programme—and in particular by refusing to permit a bold Federal housing programme, the ideal method of pump-priming—Congress has contributed to the growth of American unemployment, and the cumulative loss of purchasing power. Now, by seeking to cut allocations for foreign spending and by economising on the stock-piling of raw material, it is exporting the American slump to Europe and to such producers of raw materials as Australia, Malaya and West Africa. And finally, having fostered internal unemployment and jeopardised the recovery abroad—in defiance of the President's Fair Deal policy and the principles of Marshall Aid—it now names Britain as the villain of the piece; and leading Republicans are demanding the liquidation of the sterling bloc as the price of further aid.

The Chancellor is unlikely to be unduly disturbed by these Congressional tantrums, especially when he observes that every American Labour leader shares his view of Congress' responsibility for the crisis. Very wisely, despite the howls of indignation, he has gone ahead with the Anglo-Argentinian Pact; and the negotiations for a similar long-term deal with the Soviet Union are being prosecuted in a rather more favourable atmosphere since the Paris "agreement to disagree." The simple fact is that—Marshall Aid or no Marshall Aid—Britain as a long-term policy must buy her food and raw materials from countries which need her goods—and that means outside North America. If this is now regarded as an infringement of the principles of Marshall Aid, those principles will have to be revised or Marshall Aid shut down.

It is against this background that the complex dispute about the inter-European payments scheme must be considered. This year, recipients of sterling and other "drawing rights" have had to use the credits in buying solely from the lender. In order to appease Congress, and give Britain "a taste of free price competition," Mr. Harriman proposed that all credits should be freely convertible into other currencies. This was welcomed by the Belgians, who combine a record hoard of gold with a record figure of unemployment. They saw a chance of amassing still more dollars (or gold) at our expense; for, with virtually no programme of capital investment or social services, and purchasing power so low that import licences are unnecessary, they have a big export surplus within Europe. The French, too, were attracted by the idea of spending British credits where they pleased. Yet such a scheme would have gravely endangered our Socialist reconstruction. Because free enterprise is now the mode in Western Europe, Sir Stafford Cripps has found himself fighting an insular battle for survival, and is naturally accused of sabotaging European unity. His reply must be that Britain refuses point-blank to sacrifice fair shares for all and planned recovery for the sake of unity with the

bankers whose policies now dominate Western Europe. For the end result of such European unity would be to destroy the bulwark against Communism which it was the whole purpose of Marshall Aid to create.

This indeed is the crux of the matter. If the Americans want a stable bulwark against Communism, they will not get it by recreating the flimsy edifices of the Weimar Republic, the Third Republic and the Italian democracy which capitulated to Mussolini; or by dragooning Britain into accepting their social instability and injustice as the pattern of democracy. If Washington desires to prevent the Communist tide from engulfing the Colonial peoples, it will not do so by policies which bring sudden catastrophe to Malaya and West Africa. In 1940 we fought on alone in the expectation that sooner or later the New World would come to our aid. Now the spiral of history has brought us to a similar position. We have to defend the idea of democratic planning in a hostile world, hoping that sooner or later American Congressmen will catch up with the Fair Deal philosophy of their President.

The Haifa Refineries

Despite the post-war expansion of our Middle Eastern oil production, the biggest single item of dollar expenditure is still oil; and for this reason the motorist's "basic" will again be in danger if import cuts become necessary. "Basic," indeed, can only be saved if our sales of sterling oil, and in particular of sterling petrol, can be immediately increased. This would be possible on one condition—that the huge refinery at Haifa is reopened. In a full year it can refine four million tons of crude oil; but for 13 months it has stood idle, despite the readiness of both the Jews and the oil companies to see the resumption of production. The excuse of the Foreign Office is that the Iraqi refuse to permit oil to flow down the pipe-line from Mosul. When it is pointed out that two-thirds of Haifa's oil was normally brought by tanker from the Persian Gulf, the reply is given that Egypt would not permit our ships to pass through the Suez Canal. It is difficult to take this objection seriously, so long as no effort is made even to test Egyptian intentions. Until this is done, the suspicion will not be removed that anti-Jewish prejudice in the Middle Eastern department of the Foreign Office is preventing the restoration of one of our most important dollar-earning plants.

The Argentine Trade Pact

The agreement with the Argentine was duly signed last Monday, despite the protests from the American State Department. The following day, Sir Stafford Cripps strongly defended it in the House of Commons, as "not inconsistent either with our long-term objective of convertibility and multilateral trading or with the obligations which we have assumed in regard to third countries." He said with perfect truth that the effect of the agreement would be to expand trade and not to limit it, and that the increase of British exports to the Argentine would not prejudice sales to the dollar area. It was also officially pointed out that the only commodity covered by a long-term bargain under the contract is meat, and that the other transactions involved are on a short-term basis. Probably this will not placate the American interests, which see in the agreement a threat to American trade with the Argentine, both in oil and in a wide range of manufactured goods. But in face of the admitted lack of dollars to buy goods from the United States, except on credit, the Americans will be in fact no losers by the agreement, which in no way prevents them from selling in the Argentine any goods the Argentinians are in a position to buy. The only real significance of the agreement in relation to American policy is that its conclusion constitutes a formal recognition of the sheer impossibility of the return by Great Britain to full multilateral trading for some time ahead. The Americans are loth to accept this necessity; but there is no getting away from it, unless the British people is expected to starve itself in order to conform to the American myth of "no discrimination"—a doctrine which the Americans themselves observe only when it suits them, and not in relation to shipping or loans or (most significantly of all) immigration.

The Railway Crisis

The railwaymen's delegate meeting on Tuesday was in a thoroughly exasperated mood. The decision to "work to rule" and to refuse all overtime and special work was taken by an overwhelming majority; and there seems to have been a good deal of support for the proposal—which was ruled out of order—to call a national strike. It must not be forgotten, in considering the reasons for this attitude, that the wages claim has been under discussion for more than 15 months, during which feeling has been gradually embittered and has been aggravated by other disputes, such as the "lodging turns" dispute. The Railway Executive's amended offer, which the railwaymen rejected, was only a trivial improvement on what had been previously turned down. It still applied only to the lowest grades, so that no one earning over £4 18s. a week would have benefited by it at all. Doubtless the case of the railwaymen on the minimum is strongest; but there was surely a good case for conceding advances, even if on a declining scale, to those earning more. The N.U.R.'s decision does not apply to the other railway unions, which are not parties to the dispute; but there is known to be much sympathy with the N.U.R. claim among both locomotive men and railway shopmen, and if the threatened "work to rule" occurs a good many of the locomotive men will be likely to join in. The effect, even if they do, will not be to paralyse the service, unless the Railway Executive deliberately aggravates the situation; but holiday traffic will be held up pretty badly and goods traffic still more. In these circumstances prompt Government intervention is essential. The Railway Executive may argue that it is not entitled to make an offer which will swell its deficit; but the Government, which has to look at the problem of nationalised transport as a whole, is not bound by such narrow considerations. It should be prepared to ensure the railwaymen a tolerable wage even if railway receipts, burdened by excessive capital charges, cannot immediately foot the bill.

Canada's Liberal Landslide

The sweeping Liberal victory in the Canadian elections proves that Mr. St. Laurent is as much endowed with political appeal and leadership as his patron and predecessor, Mr. Mackenzie King. Though he is a comparative newcomer to politics, he has managed to lead his party to a resounding success, not only carrying every province save Alberta, which remains faithful to its Social Credit tradition, but also giving the Liberals the largest majority ever seen at Ottawa. In Newfoundland, too, the choice of Liberals in most constituencies was a strong endorsement of the recent union with Canada. None of the attacks on the Liberal Government by the various Opposition parties were successful. The Progressive Conservatives had hoped that under the forceful leadership of Mr. Drew, the Ontario Premier, who made as much as he could of Liberal "bureaucracy," and alleged mismanagement of Dominion-Provincial relations and trade policy, the political pendulum would swing them back in power after years of Opposition. On the contrary, they are now reduced to a rump of less than fifty Members. The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which has long sought to secure the balance of power in Ottawa and to drive the Liberals and Tories into an anti-Socialist coalition (as it had already done in British Columbia) was unable effectively to outbid the Liberals on social reform or to make much capital out of the growing unemployment. It lost more than half its seats. In the West, the C.C.F. has been torn by internal dissension over the Atlantic Pact, against which there has been strong rank-and-file protest, and it has also lost ground among the prairie farmers who have for long provided a high proportion of its national vote. In a sense, Mr. St. Laurent was right when he said there were "no major issues" in this campaign, for his opponents were too divided to offer any real threat to the Liberals' middle-of-the road policies.

The Quebec Complex

The chief interest in the election lay in the Quebec results. The Tories had hoped to make considerable headway in Quebec, whose 73 seats are crucial to any party seeking a majority, and had attacked Mr. St. Laurent as being neither a good French-Canadian nor a good Catholic. This propaganda became a boomerang. But the Liberal success in 68 of the Quebec seats was much more than a personal triumph for the Prime Minister. The Progressive Conservatives had established a working alliance with the Quebec Premier, Mr. Duplessis, whose reactionary National Union had swept the Quebec elections last year. Mr. Duplessis claims that his party concerns itself purely with provincial affairs, and he did not personally endorse any national party at this election. His powerful machine, however, was thrown behind the Tories, making a strange combination between traditional opponents—French nationalism and Empire loyalism. Undoubtedly, Premier Duplessis has lost much ground through his handling of the bitter Asbestos strike, which petered out after a hard struggle since early February. The asbestos mines, in the Eastern Townships, produce virtually the entire world output. Though the strike by several thousand members of the Catholic Syndicates was declared illegal, and police brutality aroused widespread protest, the Church hierachy for the first time ranged itself against Duplessis, raising relief funds in every Quebec parish and declaring, through Archbishop Charbonneau, of Montreal, that "when there is a conspiracy to wipe out the working class it is the duty of the Church to intervene." Since the Tory leader in Quebec, Ivan Sabourin, is not only the counsel for the largest asbestos company but also a close friend of Premier Duplessis, the strike undoubtedly helped the Liberal cause.

Belgium Polls

The failure of the Christian Social Party to secure an outright majority in the Belgian elections probably destroys King Leopold's hope of returning to his throne. The King's future is still uncertain, for the Christian Party may prefer to maintain the present compromise Regency rather than to seek a new solution. But

he cannot now expect the referendum promised by his supporters if they won control of both Houses. In spite of the moderate gains made by both the Christian Party and the Liberals, the Socialists managed to hold their ground well enough to ensure that Mr. Van Zeeland must either form another coalition or, if he seeks to govern with a Christian minority, be dependent upon the support of the Liberals or the Socialists, or both. There certainly is no majority for King Leopold. The last coalition disintegrated because the parties could not agree on fiscal policy, the Socialists tiring of junior partnership in a coalition dominated by dogmatic apostles of *laissez-faire* and conservative monetary policy. The Belgian taxation system is both inefficient and inequitable, and the solutions of the Right range from lower direct taxes—though indirect taxation has helped disorganise the price system—to cuts in public expenditure. The Socialists, though they have accepted many conservative policies in the interests of coalition unity, have tried to maintain their independence in fiscal policy and in relation to King Leopold. Will they agree to enter another coalition with a slight reduction in representation corresponding to the small but definite shift to the Right in the electorate? Will the Christian Party, which was undoubtedly successful in winning the votes of many of the women who went to the polls for the first time, be concerned to court the Socialists? If King Leopold's position is to remain ambiguous, it might be easier to form a coalition of Christians and Liberals, whose economic outlook has much in common. In any case, the new Government is certain to continue its predecessor's devotion to free currencies, liberal trade policies and similar free enterprise solutions for the difficulties of the Belgian economy. It is unlikely to meet any more success in facing those difficulties. The national bank will still be the real King in Belgium.

Return to Jogjakarta

The Indonesians will be able to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the formation of the Indonesian Republic in their capital of Jogjakarta. The Dutch troops who occupied the city last December at the time of the Dutch "military action" will be withdrawn next week. Civil administration will be handed over to the Republicans and the Residency will once again be occupied by the Sultan of Jogjakarta, whose intelligence and goodwill has gone a long way towards the success of the evacuation. He is to order a twenty-four-hour curfew while the loyal guerillas and Republican police enter the city. It now seems likely that Premier Hatta will have the support of all political parties in carrying out the Roem-Van Royen Agreement. There are still some who hold that the Dutch can never be trusted and that their present conciliatory mood is no more than a political manœuvre. Dr. Sjahrir has reserved his judgment on the matter; it is unlikely, however, that he and the Socialist Party, of which he is the leader, will make an issue of their doubts. The next stage in the relations between the Dutch and the Republic will be the round-table conference fixed to be held in the Hague on August 1 to arrange for transfer of power to a sovereign independent Indonesia. In Batavia last week the two sides met under the auspices of the United Nations Commission for Indonesia to discuss the agenda for this Conference, which they agree should conclude its work within two months. The Australian Chairman of the Commission, Mr. T. K. Critchley, spoke optimistically about the chances of a successful Conference and early settlement of the Indonesian dispute.

It All Depends

When the Local Government Boundary Commission was set up, nearly four years ago, it was clear to most people with any real knowledge of the situation that its powers were much too restricted to enable it to bring about any effective reform. The only chance seemed to be that the Commission might be given bigger powers when it asked for them and gave a plain statement of the uses to which they would be put. In due course the Commission did ask, in a report which embodied the outline of a general plan of reform; but its proposals found little favour with most sections of local government opinion, and the sequel is that the Government has now decided to abolish the Commission altogether and promises a "review," presumably by the Ministry of Health, of the entire problem of structure and areas, which is really a single and inseparable problem. The Boundary Commission, limited to proposing area changes, without changes of structure, was doomed to frustration from the outset. The question now is whether Mr. Bevan means to take the whole matter seriously in hand, or to let it slide and allow the scramble of the big towns to absorb their neighbours to be resumed without any central check. The odds are that Mr. Bevan intends to have a try at a big scheme of his own, but clearly this cannot yield results till after the General Election: so that Local Government must be added to the list of questions that will be at issue when the electors cast their votes. It will be a tragedy if the problem is again shelved; for the only way of stopping the gradual erosion of Local Government by central encroachment is to provide a more up-to-date structure, with Regionalism for large-scale services and small units for neighbourhood services as its complementary principles.

From Eisler to Thorez

Our Paris Correspondent writes:

It was touch and go. If only one vote had gone the other way, the French National Assembly would have waived the parliamentary immunity of Maurice Thorez, the Communist leader, who was charged by a magistrate with having hit a heckler at an election meeting two years ago. The incident was an extremely trivial one, and even the plaintiff, a Socialist of the name of Karinsky, wasn't quite sure whether Thorez was chiefly responsible for the injuries he (Karinsky) claimed to have suffered in the brawl. A good case was made out by Duclos in the debate to show that the whole question would never have been brought before Parliament at all if the person involved had not been Thorez. He also recalled that the Assembly had recently refused to waive the parliamentary immunity of a non-Communist deputy who had shot his son; and added significantly that of the 38 recent proposals to waive these immunities, 36 were directed against Communist deputies. About half the Assembly—including all the members of the Government—abstained from voting, and the bulk of the anti-Thorez vote was de-Gaullist, Extreme Right, and Socialist. Not a single Socialist voted "for" Thorez, though some M.R.P. members did. To the French Socialists, the Communists have become Enemy No. 1. This is in strict accordance with M. Blum's latest pronunciamento, but the National Assembly would scarcely have increased its own democratic prestige if it had waived Thorez's parliamentary immunity on so flimsy a pretext, though, no doubt, as one member in the lobbies remarked, they would have been pleased in Washington to "get" Thorez—even if they couldn't get Eisler.

PARLIAMENT: Hoary Taxes

Wednesday

THE Commons sweated through the Committee Stage of the Finance Bill, most of them in winter sable though a few relaxed in what looked like Palm Beach suits. Owing to the Chancellor's veto on purchase-tax amendments, the debate was shorter than usual, late night sittings fewer, and not till Tuesday did Members see the dawn come up the river while the candles in the Chamber were still burning.

Glenvil Hall, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, resisted a long series of amendments. He is now a tradition at the despatch-box during the Finance Bill, and were there a Tory Government again, it would seem almost as much a breach of precedent, if they replaced Glenvil Hall by someone else, as if they replaced, say, Mr. Speaker. One of the Financial Secretary's great merits is that although he almost always has to say "No," he says it very amiably, and if, provoked by the Tories, he raises his voice, it is only to make the obvious louder.

The Pool Promoters were naturally at a disadvantage when their tortuous and rather grubby campaign was opposed by one so straightforward and fresh as Glenvil Hall. It is true that, as a result of their letter-lobbying in Members' homes, they had already created an unfavourable mood among Tories as well as Socialists. Haworth, exposing how the Pool Promoters had impressed their workers with threats into writing to their M.P.s, stifled any sympathy for their propaganda: "Government unfair to Pool Promoters and working men." It was a pity that Will Nally, an experienced political delouser, was ruled out of order before he had fully explored what goes on in the Pool's underseams.

The Tories, divided about Pools, were united about income-tax. Eccles, who presents his *non sequiturs* with statesmanlike moderation, said that the tax was too high; that the Roman Empire had controls, social services and high taxation; and that therefore the British Empire would decline unless a start to save it were made by his amendment to take sixpence off income-tax. Donald Bruce, now one of Labour's best debaters on financial matters, had no difficulty in showing statistically that the Tory proposal would benefit the poor little and the rich much. The Tories listened quietly. But their attitude changed when Crossman rose. They regard him as a traitor to the upper class in the same way as the Communists regard a worker as a social traitor when he becomes a Liberal.

If they didn't like his speech it was no doubt because he had given the House one of its finest analyses of the difference between the attitude of Tories and Socialists—not of *ad hoc* Socialists as Lord Milverton was, but of men who believe in Socialist principles. It was a pity that Douglas Jay in winding-up should have shown more sympathy for John Lewis' export-bonus-for-business-men proposal than for Crossman's Socialist speech.

The Tories rallied their distilling representatives to reduce the whisky duty. Even their former Chief Whip Stuart came forward to speak. The argument against the high duty ranged from a complaint that the connoisseurs were disappearing to the old chestnut that the export trade necessarily depends on a large home market. Oliver Stanley, whose treatment of all the Clauses in the Bill had been more or less objective, could not see how drinking more whisky at home would enable more to go overseas. His disagreement with his back-benchers, conducted with the utmost tolerance, was watched wistfully by Labour back-benchers. They recalled that on their side, domestic disputes are less restrained.

There is no doubt that with Nicholson on gin and Gurney Braithwaite on spirits, the debate might have gone on for a long time. The Tories were indeed up to the minute in their information since one of their spokesmen, Brigadier Peto, had arrived hot foot at the House after being entertained, by a coincidence, by a distiller at Lords. But the House had other things to do than discuss whisky indefinitely; the Chief Whip moved the closure; and the Tories, rallied by the defiant shout of Gurney Braithwaite, voted resolutely for their cause.

MAURICE EDELMAN

PRO BONO PUBLICO

No one expected revolutionary proposals from the inquest which His Majesty's "Trusty and Well-beloved" Commissioners were enjoined to conduct on the British press. Legislative remedies for the main evils of the press are not easy to formulate, and this Commission was not the sort of Commission even to attempt such a task. It is, however, somewhat surprising that the Report which is now issued contains no recommendation of any substance at all.

We expected the Commission to hold that "free enterprise in the production of newspapers is a pre-requisite of a free press, and free enterprise will generally mean commercially profitable enterprise in the case of newspapers of any considerable size and circulation." What we had not assumed was that, in accepting as final the standards of a capitalist society, the Commission would also think it worth while to say that the press gives "good value for money," that soaring circulations are proof that the public is being given "what it wants," and, in effect, that any effort to check by law or regulations any press abuse would be a sin against the principle that the proprietor should be absolutely free to do what he likes within his own house. In short, the Commission has interpreted free enterprise as it would have been interpreted a century ago, thereby making its appointment ridiculous. For if it is a matter of principle not to limit the proprietor's sovereignty, then no remedy could be accepted, however great the evils that might be exposed. The most that could emerge was what in fact does emerge—a hope that newspaper proprietors may devise some scheme for improving the educational qualifications of their employees and that a voluntary Press Council may be established, without powers, to promote the efficiency of the profession and the well-being of those who practise it.

Was it worth while spending two years in the gestation of this pious little mouse? Since the whole tenor of the Report is that a nation gets, very properly, the newspapers it deserves, and that even a statutory enactment of the "right to reply" would be an unwarrantable interference with the legitimate claim of proprietors to "control" what appears in their columns, the press lords will doubtless be delighted with the outcome of the Commission's labour. Indeed, no more respectful whitewashing of large-scale capitalist enterprise in the production of newspapers could have been expected had the Commission been appointed not by the sixth George Rex but by the first Baron Kemsley. All we can say in favour of the Report is that the diligent student will find recorded in its pages some unconsidered trifles which are worth picking up. For example, there is the lengthy appendix devoted to an investigation into the treatment by the press of a number of important public issues such as the progress of the coal industry, bread rationing, housing and the Gravesend by-election in 1947. Complacent though it was, the Commission duly noted glaring examples of sins of omission and distortion in the treatment of these subjects; and in the case of the by-election it observes that "news and comment were inextricably mixed . . . there was little attempt, in the majority of newspapers, to give an adequate presentation of the views of the party to which the particular newspaper was opposed."

The Commission, however, is not dismayed. If the popular press is trivial and sensational, its contents can at least be "easily assimilated." If ownership of the national newspapers is highly concentrated and the provincial press dominated by chains, why worry? Did not Lord Kemsley assure the Commission that it was quite unnecessary for him to tell his editors his views on any subject since they were all "men with similar ideas to my own"? And may we not take comfort from the delicious picture presented of Lord Beaverbrook "talking his editors out of it" if their views on Empire Free Trade did not coincide with his? Does it matter that, in 1946, the *Daily Graphic* should have published a circumstantial and wholly apocryphal report of a cocktail party to be given by Mr. Shinwell for "1,000 guests" to celebrate the transfer of the coal industry to State ownership? The practice of publishing "complete fabrications" is not general; and, in any event, the press can well be left to adhere to "the high standards of public responsibility which it explicitly acknowledges."

When the Government appointed this Royal Commission, it might have been thought that they were seriously concerned with the question whether the domination of the British press by a comparatively small group of big capitalist interests was compatible with the orderly progress towards Socialism of a politically adult democracy. If that issue was in their minds, they are relieved by the Commission's Report from the embarrassing necessity of doing anything about it. In no single paragraph of this Report is there the faintest indication that the Commissioners consider the task of transmuting an acquisitive society to be in any way complicated by the present overwhelmingly capitalist structure of newspaper ownership. Why, indeed, should they be concerned with such a problem, when it is clear that the conception of a Socialist Britain was from the outset completely excluded from their political philosophy?

THE COAL BOARD AND THE FUTURE

It may take ten years to get a new colliery into full production, and not much less long to carry through a complete plan of reconstruction at a group of old pits. For this reason, planning for the coal industry is essentially a long-term business, involving very difficult questions in the estimation of future demand. Moreover, there is a shortage of capacity for the making of new mining machinery, even when it could be installed at once; and this limits the pace at which even secondary measures of reorganisation can be carried out. Add to this the necessity to do nothing that will reduce coal production in the immediate future, even for the sake of expanding it later on; and it must be admitted that the National Coal Board is facing a difficult technical task, and that it can make a case for not having completed by now the national plan of reconstruction which it is under obligation to submit to the Government as soon as it can.

Yet inevitably the absence of any formulated plan for the future exposes the Board to a great deal of disadvantage. The sectional plans which it is putting into effect all over the country already involve the closing before long of a good number of high-cost pits, either because they are too near exhaustion to be worth reconstructing or because the coal in them can be reached more economically from neighbouring pits. As long as there is no overall plan, each closure is liable to promote strong protests from the miners who will be displaced and will have to seek new jobs elsewhere—perhaps in an entirely new neighbourhood; and the uncertainty about what is to happen in the industry generally makes it impossible to tackle the problems of closure and re-employment on any comprehensive scale, by means of a general treaty with the National Union of Mineworkers. This uncertainty fosters unrest: the miners have still a fear that, though they are too few to-day, they may be found too many to-morrow. This leads them to resist not only pit closures, but also re-assesssments of production tasks in connection with new interim working methods. It is an unquestionable fact, though one would not at all gather this from studying the N.C.B.'s report, that a high proportion of the miners are suspicious of the Board's intentions—suspicious even that the Board is deliberately delaying to formulate its full plans until it can catch the N.U.M. at a disadvantage, perhaps as a consequence of a general recession of trade.

There is, we believe, no further foundation for these suspicions than that a good proportion of the Board's officers and of the colliery managers mutter darkly from time to time about a coming day when "discipline" will be restored in the pits and a "new wage structure" be introduced on a basis that will sharply cut wage costs. This, however, is enough to arouse lively, and not wholly unfounded, suspicions about the future. The Board is not likely to be deliberately holding back its national plan, which is bound to take a considerable time to get ready; but some of its members and not a few of its officers may be thinking that the delay will be all to the good if the plan, when it is finished, finds the miner in a more chastened mood.

The evident fact is that, if the miners are suspicious of the Board, so are the leaders of the industry suspicious of the miners. After all, they are mostly the same men who, until a few years ago, were used to having their own way and enforcing a rough discipline with no questions asked, or answered. Most of them grew up in a period of persistent depression and unemployment which enabled them to treat the miners much as they pleased; and it would be a miracle if they took altogether kindly to the changed state of affairs due, not to nationalisation, but to acute shortage of labour, or welcomed the new system of joint consultation as a real opportunity to admit the miners to partnership in a democratic co-operative enterprise. There are, we know, mine managers and mining engineers who are doing their best to win the men's confidence by giving their own; but it will hardly be denied that there are men who are to some extent sulky about the new status they are supposed to accord to mine workers, and reluctant to do more than observe the mere letter of their instructions to make consultation a reality. As such an attitude breeds a corresponding mistrust on the other side, or aggravates it where it already exists, many a manager and official feel they can declare, with their hands on their hearts, that there is no co-operative spirit among the miners, and that it is not their fault if joint consultative committees are little better than a farce.

What applies to managers and higher officials applies with at least as much force to lesser officials, such as overmen and deputies. The Board had for the most part to take over the men who were already doing the managerial and supervising jobs; and with them it inevitably took over the bad tradition of human relations in the pits. The ground for complaint is not that this has happened, but that the Board seems too little aware of its effects, and too little prepared

with any remedy. It is, no doubt, trying to do something by offering better opportunities of training, including training in human problems, to promising recruits from the industry with a view to filling posts in the future with a better type of men. But this is necessarily a very slow process, though it can, if rightly done, yield admirable results in the distant future. What is needed in addition is more real consultation now, not only of committees at every level, but of the whole body of miners by franker public discussion of what the Board has in mind. It is not so much an improved structure of consultation that is needed as a more determined effort to breathe life into the structure that is already there, but is nine-tenths inoperative in practice.

In the matter of general organisation, given the assumption that the Board method is the right one for the conduct of great nationalised services, the N.C.B. succeeds in making out its case against its critics on most of the points at issue. It argues cogently against those who wish to break the industry up into a series of autonomous regional trusts, and no less cogently for its structure of Regions and Areas within a co-ordinated national framework. There is a doubt whether its Areas—the main operating units—are not in many cases too big; but its answer on this point is that the number has been largely dictated by the scarcity of competent men to put in charge of them. Presumably, the Board would use the same argument to justify its policy of adopting one-man control in each Area, whereas at the Centre and in the Divisions control is vested in a collegiate board; but it seems unfortunate that this has had to be done, both because in practice it puts the mining engineer on top throughout the Areas and because it tends to foster a subordinate autocracy among mine managers, and thus to subordinate the human factor to the technical and frustrate the provisions for joint consultation at the lower levels, where they are most important. Against the critics who accuse it of over-centralisation the Board has a good answer: it hardly troubles to answer those who accuse it of putting nearly all the effective power into the technicians' hands.

Yet this matters immensely because the coal problem is at bottom even more human than technical. The coming technical revolution in the coal industry will not yield the cost-reductions and the increased output expected from it unless the miners are willing to play; and the miners will not play, however much attention may be paid to welfare, unless they can be got to feel that the job to be done is their job, as well as that of the management they have been used to regarding as "the enemy." The Board insists that it has already made large concessions in wages and conditions to the miners, as a *quid pro quo* for an increased output that has still to be achieved. The miners do not see matters at all in that light: they simply feel that, after being exploited, they have come at last into some of their own. They do not feel grateful to the Board for this: nor will they, unless and until they can feel that the Board is treating them as partners, and not simply as hands needing to be well fed.

What troubles us about the N.C.B.'s Report is its complacency, not about the technical and economic problems ahead of it—for the difficulty of these it sees very plainly—but about the human side of its work. We should like to see, in connection with the new appointments to its ranks, a thorough overhaul of personnel concerned with human relations, at every level from the pits upwards. Much of the widespread discontent about the Board's appointments, including those made locally, may rest on misunderstandings or on inevitable personal jealousies; but there is so much of it as to suggest strongly that more than this is the matter. On the score of sheer accomplishment so far, the Board has not done at all badly in its essential tasks of technical development, nor is its actual achievement in output by any means to be sneered at. But it needs to do much better; and the clue to the great advance that is needed is to improve the human relations on which in the last resort technical as well as other sorts of efficiency must depend.

PREPARING FOR WORSE?

(By a Chinese Correspondent)

American policy towards China can be judged by watching Washington. British policy, from the standpoint of the average Chinese, is gauged by a dual test. What is said or done in distant Whitehall may be significant, but the behaviour of the Hong Kong Colonial Government is an equally important, more easily read, barometer. To the local observer, present readings are disquieting.

Except for allowing the Kuomintang to use Hong Kong as a base from which the new First Army was dispatched to Manchuria in 1946, the authorities in Hong Kong maintained, on the whole, an attitude of scrupulous neutrality in the civil war—until the Chiang Kai-shek regime began to collapse. Although it had never been considered necessary to take precautionary steps against local activities—culminating in the burning of the British Consulate in Canton—conducted by gangsters in the pay of Tai-li, the Himmler of Kuomintang China, the crossing of the Yangtze by the Chinese Communist armies was the signal for Hong Kong to become vociferously defence-minded. Even before the announcement from Whitehall that reinforcements of Regulars were to be sent out, a voluntary defence corps was being organised, an additional aerodrome planned; and orders were issued to the military garrison that they must be ready to support the police "in case of civil disobedience." The impression created by these measures was inevitably that the authorities felt that "enemies"—meaning the Chinese Communists—might soon be at the gate; and, in Chinese eyes, the suspicion that the Colonial Government was no longer politically neutral was heightened by the fact that, after the closure early in the year of an allegedly Left-wing college, all school teachers had been put on a licence basis.

Then came a measure which substantially curtailed the right to assemble. At the end of May, a Bill, of which the Committee on Un-American Activities might have been proud, was hurriedly passed. Its provisions were that all Societies with more than ten members must register with the Colonial Government. This done, the Registrar (the Chief Constable) is empowered to ban any Society which has any connection with political bodies outside the Island. Furthermore, under this extraordinary Bill, every resident in Hong Kong is liable to be summoned as a witness against any other "suspected" resident; and, if the Chief Constable considers it advisable for purposes of identification, such witnesses may be compulsorily photographed and required to submit to finger-printing. Any person obstructing these provisions becomes liable to arrest and, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding 200 dollars.

To Chinese residents the timing of this Bill, which was passed on the day that Shanghai fell, seems significant. In moving its adoption, the Attorney-General, the Hon. J. B. Griffin, observed that "the state of the world is gravely unsettled, and the maintenance of law and order in the Colony is likely to be endangered by outside influences." The Societies Ordinance, he added, had not been revised since 1920. Why the necessity for it urgent revision now? Chinese residents could not help recalling that, since 1920, "unsettlement" in China—not to speak of the world—had been visible even from Hong Kong, and that, apart from the "incident" of Japanese occupation, the Island had traditionally been used as a base by notorious smugglers, pirates, criminals and traitors. Had not the group led by the quisling Wang Ching-wei maintained several offices in the Colony before Pearl Harbour and even published a Chinese daily newspaper? As a tool of the Japanese, Wang was working as much for the betrayal of Hong Kong as of China; but there was apparently no need to revise the Societies Ordinance during the period of his subversive activities. Moreover, though Kuomintang agents and army deserters have lately been guilty of numerous outrages in Hong Kong, Mr. Griffin could not argue that the Chinese Left wing in the Colony had been responsible for any sort of social disturbance or even a labour dispute.

The result, calculated or not, of this new "Society Ban" has been to evoke angry protests, on the Communist radio system, from the Democratic League. The League declared that this creation by Britain of a "Police State" in Hong Kong would jeopardise the establishment of normal relations between Britain and New China and needlessly injure the friendship between the Chinese and British peoples. The Colonial Government appears to regard this protest with indifference; but its attitude contrasts oddly with the professed desire of Mr. Ernest Bevin, in his speech at Blackpool, to retain a friendly relationship with China. Even in the matter of trade, the official attitude seems to run counter to the interests and hopes of the British business community. For instance, the Controller of Films recently banned the showing in Hong Kong of three pictures which a merchant had brought back from Manchuria in part payment for goods sold there. The reason given for the banning of these pictures, which were documentaries dealing with the progress of industrialisation in the North, was that the Chinese Communists had, on their side, recently banned the showing of three British pictures. However that may be—and at least one of the banned "British" pictures was made in Hollywood—this foolish act of retaliation has done much to prejudice the entire future of British films in China.

The British had a much better chance than the Americans to establish mutually advantageous relations with New China. In Chinese eyes, they were not nearly so closely identified as the Americans with the Kuomintang regime, nor could they be held nearly so responsible for prolonging the bloodshed of the civil war. But, I repeat, through its geographical proximity, Hong Kong rather than Whitehall is the barometer which the Chinese study. A general, and perhaps shrewd, Chinese comment here is that Britain always hopes for better things and prepares for worse—a modern political gloss on Ovid's defeatism. If that be true, then it is Hong Kong apparently which is being allotted the role of "preparing." If further follies in these preparations are not vetoed by Whitehall, there is a real danger of irreparable damage being done to Anglo-Chinese relations.

Hong Kong, June.

A LONDON DIARY

THE new Wimbledon habit of applauding when American players make mistakes is grossly bad form. But it is not, I am sure, an index of any political trend or a sign of ingratitude for Marshall Aid. It is a reflection of the tennis-loving public's dislike of play which is not so good to watch. Among the chief American players only Parker, I am told, is really popular—they say that people like his manners. Some of the other Americans have given too much the impression of being only interested in winning; it is style and personality that earn popularity. The public is entirely wrong in booing when players deliberately throw away a few games in one set in order to be fresh for the coming decisive one; though unattractive from the spectators' point of view, this is perfectly proper and accepted tactics. But the idea has got around that tennis, like other sports, is now only pretending to be amateur. I recall an article that appeared in this journal before the war entitled "The Tennis Racket." Some players, we are told, are financed on a big scale by advertisers. Moreover, victory becomes a desperate business because a highly paid professional job may await the victor. The public does not like to see one of these immensely powerful young men win against a much more skilful player merely because, as you may say, he has a couple more steaks behind his racket. They recall the gay sportsmanship of Borotra. They can also appreciate the dramatic value of seeing Miss Moran defeated by a very plain, diminutive and hard-working Chinese girl about whose underwear nothing has so far appeared in the newspapers. I am not condoning the practice of barracking Americans, but I am explaining that the feeling behind it is not nationalist—the most popular players at Wimbledon this year have not, I think, been English—but a distaste for seeing this almost savage attitude towards a game in which style, skill and grace used to count for so much.

* * *

Lord Milverton has carved himself a curious niche in Parliamentary history by cramming into two years his entry into politics, his conversion to Socialism, his acquisition of a peerage and his recantation. Whatever one thinks of its propriety —or of the Premier's judgment of men—this brief and dramatic political career would have made a good news story. But the B.B.C. and the popular press, though they blazoned his condemnation of the Iron and Steel Bill, discreetly slurred over this aspect of the matter. Anyone who does not read Tom Driberg's column in *Reynolds News*, or failed to notice a short letter from Maurice Webb tucked away at the bottom of a column in *The Times*, would never have discovered that Lord Milverton joined the Labour Party *after* the Prime Minister's announcement in 1947 that the Cabinet had decided to go ahead with the nationalisation of iron and steel.

* * *

I was delighted to read in the *Sunday Express* John Gordon's very downright exposure of the efforts made by football pools promoters to misuse the press for the purpose of gulling still further their gullible investors. The facts he described fully confirmed Will Nally's accusations on the floor of the House during the debate on the proposal to increase the tax on pools from 20 to 30 per cent. A few of the Tories, who are loudly demanding that "hundreds of millions of pounds" should be lopped off the social services, spoke and voted for the pools promoters just as a few days' later they were urging a reduction in the whisky duty. But the House as a whole was obviously not prepared to surrender to the threats of a singularly distasteful pressure group. It is a real anomaly that these promoters are permitted to do as they like with the millions of small investments which they collect without publishing any form of accounts. I can only hope that the Royal Commission on Gambling will make some precise proposals to ensure that in future they are compelled by law to submit a public audit.

* * *

The notion that no British workman nowadays does a job of work has been put about so assiduously that quite a lot of Labour supporters have begun to believe it. When an authoritative outside body reports to the contrary, it wins little publicity in the press. I came across an exception. The *Daily Mail* on Tuesday carried on its front page this tiny news item:

> Britain is the only European country to have got her coal output per man-shift up to pre-war level—and the only one with fewer miners than before the war, reports the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

This little paragraph appeared at least in one edition. I could not find it in another edition nor in other newspapers. I came to the conclusion that some old-fashioned journalist had slipped up badly in attempting to be fair to English workmen in a Conservative paper.

* * *

The Civil Service purge has been going on for more than a year. Of less than fifty victims, one is a known Fascist, twelve are Communists and the remainder range from past members of the C.P. to a former member of the Labour Party who spent the whole war in the R.A.F. and, since his discharge, has not—according to his own testimony—belonged to any political party. I have been reading a document prepared by the Civil Service Political Freedom Com...ittee, formed by the staff organisations, which makes several disturbing criticisms of the purge. The Prime Minister, when he initiated it last year, promised that it would be "limited to excluding from secret work those who cannot be trusted." Yet in several cases, people have been suspended from purely routine duties, one of them being a War Office cleaner who had already resigned. A Ministry of Supply scientist, whose research work on penicillin was far from secret, was also removed from duty. Mr. Attlee originally agreed that, whenever charges were made against an officer, he should be informed of their nature save where this meant revealing the source of the information laid against him. Yet some officials, told that there were "doubts about their reliability," have been unable to clear themselves because they still are ignorant of the specific sins they are supposed to have committed. Another consequence of the purge has been the extension of political discrimination to private firms, especially those hoping for Government contracts.

* * *

How odd to find the *Well of Loneliness* republished in 1949! What a commotion it made in its day! The row began with James Douglas bawling across the columns of a Sunday paper that he would rather see his daughter dead at his feet than reading this book. That, you may be sure, made everyone leap for it. I had already read it because, by a strange accident, Alan Monkhouse, Literary Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, had given it to me to review. C. P. Scott, who had not read it (he borrowed my copy), refused to print any review of it at all. In the *Nation*, Leonard Woolf did justice to its serious qualities, while in the *New Statesman* Cyril Connolly said that it would be impossible to find a novel more "fanatical" and that it was "a long, tedious and absolutely humourless book." By way of illustration of its peculiar brand of unconscious absurdity, he quoted the following:

> Have you ever thought about the enormous courage of trees? I have, and it seems to me amazing. The Lord dumps them down and they've just got to stick to it, no matter what happens—that must need some courage.

This was the book the police wanted to burn as obscene. Desmond MacCarthy, Leonard Woolf and a lot of others were summoned as experts to testify that the book was not obscene. The magistrate refused to hear them. He told Desmond MacCarthy that he might be a literary expert, but he could not claim to be any more of an expert on obscenity than anyone else. The book was burned—to the indifference of the public, which would not have read it anyway, and to the mixed anger and relief of the literary world which was bound on principle to fight for the right to read and write about Lesbianism, but which was bored almost beyond endurance by Miss Radclyffe Hall's treatment of a subject which, in the hands of Diderot, had once had a certain piquancy.

* * *

Mr. Park and I agreed that the drought was getting serious. We "wanted rain and we didn't" —not till the hay was in. The ground's like powder. Nice little dwarf zinnias I planted are shrivelled up in the heat. I pointed out cheerfully that the roses were looking their best; the thornless rose against the old apple tree is now ten feet high; the Chinese moyesii, that has never been pruned, is nearly as tall as the cottage and a quite wonderful sight with its rust-red flowers and dark green leaves. One of the honeysuckles is so thick with fly that it's not worth trying to save this year, but the one that I trained to climb up the pear tree is a mass of blossom and scents the whole garden. Mr. Park, however, refused to be comforted. Everything was drying up. Well, I said, the weather seemed made for the sea. I thought I'd try to get a bathe and lie on the shore. "Ah," said Mr. Park, looking at the brazen sky, "you'll probably be sorry if you do. There's thunder about. It'll come on just about when you get down to the sea."

* * *

This is also a true story. A friend, anxious to get his car away after the steamer docked at Dover, was talking to his neighbour in the queue on Boulogne harbour. "Is it last on, first off?" he asked. "Or do they really try to unload in a fair order?" "Well," came the answer, "you could fix it in the past. Drive around and get on late and you were away first at the other end. Now the boats have been nationalised, there isn't a decent racket left!"

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

I have no reason to suppose that anything that is not in the archives of the Foreign Office does exist.—Mr. Bevin, reported in *The Times*. (R. E. Hemmings.)

—, no fixed abode, said to have an incurable urge for drinking the liquor out of ships' compasses, was sentenced yesterday at Aberdeen to four months' imprisonment for stealing a gallon of mixture from the compass of a trawler berthed at Aberdeen.—*News Chronicle*. (E. S. Crocker.)

Boys, as well as girls, should, in suitable cases, be given lessons on housekeeping and living together, with improved sex education.—*Daily Express*. (J. M. Berman.)

There seems to be a large number of Russians in England at the moment. Hardly a bus or train is without someone reading a Russian newspaper.

And at more than one seaside resort, after twelve at night, one can see groups of men walking along the front talking Russian in loud voices.

Have they come over for the strikes—or for more artistic efforts, such as the ballet or the opera?—*The Recorder*. (D. Lane.)

Wanted, for decorative purpose, five human skulls. Also massive, ornate, inexpensive Victorian cast-iron garden furniture in Gothic and Rustic designs.—Advert. in the *Tablet*. (Herbert Bryan.)

Because one of her house tenants—aged 75—is a Communist, Mrs. G. Foley, of Madeley Street, Derby, gave him notice.

"I did it because my husband believes in fighting for his King and country," Mrs. Foley told Derby Rent Tribunal.—*Sunday Graphic*. (K. Bowden.)

The idea of regimenting our children into wearing standard clothes may not appeal very much to our sense of freedom and liberty to choose, but surely the top hats of Eton and the straw hats of Harrow were regarded as democratic symbols of equality.—Letter in *News Chronicle*. (Joan J. Camptsell.)

AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION PROBLEMS

(By a Correspondent)

This year, between 70,000 and 80,000 people will leave Britain to settle in Australia. They will be part of a vast army of migrants which Australia is welcoming and encouraging in her efforts to build up her population. Prime Minister Chifley indicated how seriously he regarded this question when he said recently that he was prepared to risk political unpopularity to ensure a flow of migrants into Australia. He reminded his audience—a conference of State Immigration Ministers—that the world's population is rising by 60,000 a day, including 43,000 Asiatics.

No one expects Japan to sustain 80 million people in 1952, and there is the vastly expanded population of Indonesia. There are 1,200 million people just North of Australia. Unless we are prepared to do something with our country, like the peoples of Belgium and Holland have done to undertake intensive cultivation, we will not be able to justify before the world our retention of this great country.

Mr. Arthur Calwell, Commonwealth Immigration Minister, went further some months ago. "Australia is in danger of extinction within the next 25 years," he said. Australians had to decide whether they would survive or become a Eurasian nation "under the same people who, not long ago, were torturing Australian troops. Our hope for salvation lies in being able to induce fine types of Europeans to throw in their lot with ours."

Events may prove Mr. Calwell's fear to be groundless. But the Australian Government sees its country to-day as an isolated outpost of European civilisation, surrounded by over-crowded countries, many with rising nationalist movements and uncertain futures. During the early stages of the Pacific war Australia was forced to defend large areas with meagre forces. She received an unpleasant shock then, and it is chiefly in the direction of Japan that her present fears lie—fears intensified by the falling birthrate. According to one estimate, if the present trend should continue, Australia's population, excluding gains from immigration, will drop to less than two millions within a century. "Migration must be a defence policy. We must maintain Australia as the bastion of the British Commonwealth in the Pacific," Mr. Calwell has said.

With all but a fraction of her population British in origin, Australia gives preference to migrants from Britain for obvious reasons—cultural, historical, lingual, social and economic. But shipping still limits the number of people who can travel from Britain, so Australia is now prepared to accept large numbers of migrants from most European countries. From the beginning of this year to the end of June, 1950, it is expected that 100,000 Displaced Persons will leave Europe for Australia. Mr. William Tuck, Director-General of the International Refugee Organisation, has described this as one of the most promising programmes undertaken by any I.R.O. member. Other new settlers have gone to Australia from Italy and Holland, and even German women can go to Australia to marry, providing they pass certain tests, including screening for Nazi sympathies. The latest proposal is for 5,000 Dutch troops at present serving in Java to be demobilised in Australia.

Already Australia can see her present population of just over 7,700,000 reaching 8 million by the end of next year and 9 million by 1955. Mr. Calwell has said that a population of 20 millions—the ultimate aim of the Government—is likely within the lifetime of most Australians. These are impressive figures, comparable with the influx into the U.S.A. during the second half of the last century.

The question arises: "How many people can Australia absorb?" For Australia, despite her size and well-meaning propaganda in the past, is not a land richly endowed with natural resources. She can never expect a population on the scale of the United States. Her population has very definite limits. Professor Griffith Taylor, one of the leading authorities on the country, holds that, if the standard of living is to be similar to that of Europe, Australia's maximum population will be about 60 millions. But if the standard of living is to be twice as high as in Europe then the population cannot exceed 30 millions. An Australian Science Congress was told early this year that Australia could support about 13 millions on a United States' living standard. If that be so, then Australia's living standards, now among the world's highest, may be endangered as the 20 million mark is neared.

Mr. R. T. Pollard, Australia's Commerce and Agriculture Minister, sounded a warning recently that, despite her current big export of surpluses of wheat, meat and other foods, Australia might be forced into becoming an importer of food after her population reached 10 millions, unless there was a big rural development. Mr. Pollard was urging the breaking up of large holdings and the application of scientific and technical knowledge as the only way of avoiding this. For nearly half of Australia is termed "arid" by the geographer, and a fifth of the great continent is completely useless. There is only one important mountain chain and one big river system, limiting the opportunities for irrigation and hydro-electric power; coal deposits are far removed from the few iron ore deposits; and there have been no important oil finds so far.

Nevertheless, Australia has already become a not unimportant industrial country. The output of her factories has increased from £A110 millions in 1931 to £A410 millions in 1946-47, and is now worth considerably more than her agricultural and pastoral production. To-day, one in every four of Australia's 3,212,000 workers is engaged in a manufacturing industry and the demand for labour is still far from satisfied. Indeed, most of the new arrivals are going into industry. Land development schemes are at present reserved mainly for Australia's own ex-Servicemen.

This great influx of migrants is bound to create difficulties, and some Ministers have already expressed the view that the immigration plan is too big, fearing that it will cause serious economic disruption. The first big migration problem—sufficient ships to transport large numbers to Australia—has been overcome, and the most serious one now is housing. Last year the record number of 48,000 new houses were built, compared with a yearly average of 27,000 before the war. But during the same period 70,000 new settlers went to Australia. Competition for housing naturally leads to friction between Australians and newcomers, and those people who have returned to England disillusioned about settling in Australia have generally gone out there without making certain that they could obtain accommodation when they arrived. The Federal Government is now building huge barracks for 50,000 D.P.s as a temporary measure to prevent them competing for housing, but it has refused to allow the housing position to check the flow of migrants. "If we wait until we get houses for them we will never get anyone here," Mr. Calwell has said, and the Housing Minister of Victoria has stated bluntly: "If Australia wants migrants it must accept them, even if they accentuate the housing problem."

The D.P.s, who will total about 34,000 by the end of July, are mostly Balts, and the Government is well aware that they cannot be expected to become absorbed quickly into the community. Instruction in the "Australian way of life" begins for them on the voyage to Australia, English-language classes are conducted throughout the country, and they can even take lessons by correspondence or radio broadcasts. They have a special monthly paper and are encouraged to become naturalised. In turn, the Government is prepared to shorten the two-year contract period, during which incoming D.P.s must work under Government direction, if they show that they are fitting into the community. But, as in England, the Balts are regarded with suspicion by some of the trade unions and by people with Left-wing political sympathies. There is no doubt that most Australians would prefer to have English migrants, with their background of trade unionism, working alongside them.

CHURCHILL WEATHER

Cripps is at his moorings beside the Quai d'Orsai,
(Capten, art tha growlin' there below?)
Marshall States and Yankees gather for the fray,
Cripps stands firm to dam the dollar flow.
Yarnder looms the trade gap, yarnder lie the ships,
The Marshall Main for markets we shall scour.
The dollar-payment sorties takes us back to
Nineteen Forty,
When we held the fort undaunted
in Britain's finest hour.

Cripps he is the Chancellor and rules our *L.S.D.*
(Capten, art tha growlin' there below?)
Britain breathes defiance against exchanges free,
She tells the Continentals where to go.
Raise the sterling standard, rouse the sterling Bloc!
Rally round the jewels in the Tower!
If Belgians try to collar our last remaining dollar
They will find us "ware and wakin"
as in Britain's finest hour.

Hear the voice of Winston, rumbling down Whitehall,
(Attlee, art tha growlin' there below?)
"Watch us with our backs against the U.S. tariff wall,
Ready for another Dunkirk show.
Take my book to Paris, hang it by the Bourse,
Britain they shall never overpower;
In this dirty Churchill weather,
let 'em all gang up together,
In our economic warfare this is
Britain's finest hour."

Sagittarius

JEWS AT HOME

[Readers may remember an article, "Jews at War," which Mr. Winocour contributed to our columns a year ago, when he was a British newspaper correspondent in Palestine. He is now working in Israel on the staff of the *Palestine Post*.]

THE hills above Jerusalem are silent except for the murmur of bees in the clover where last year the battery of mortars stood. The fluid front has frozen into the immobility of armistice, and from my window I can watch the play of light on the grey Old City walls, where Arab legionnaires drowse in the sunshine. Children pick wild flowers for Sabbath nosegays in Mamilla graveyard, and youth makes summer love in the velvet night by the Monastery of the Cross. In Rehavia drawing-rooms ice tinkles in tall glasses. To-morrow there may be *khamsin*; but no war.

The heroic days are over. They were brave days of war and wonder. We tasted them briefly, and they have left behind a nostalgia for danger and lost comradeship, which are remembered longer than thirst or hunger or weary days of siege. The revolutionary brigades—for this was a revolution as well as a war—are no more and the remnant of those who died at Zion Gate, before Latrun, and in the wastelands of the Negev, has been fused into anonymity in the defence army of Israel.

That was yesterday. To-day the diplomats drink tea on the lawns of Ha'Kirya, the Government quarter outside Tel Aviv. Many people are very important. And the tourists gape and focus their miniature cameras on the debris of battlefields, and complain about the price of Martinis and their composition. "Three parts gin and one of vermouth," they moan to the apathetic bartender, who was once a lawyer.

Is it, after all, like everywhere else? Some people have cars and some walk. Some people have houses and others live in tents. Some have money, and others jingle the last few piastres in their pockets.

They willed it; and it came to pass. To have something or to have nothing; but always to be themselves. This reality of nationhood still has a dreamlike quality. Sometimes I catch my breath in wonder. Even if it dissolved now, it would leave behind a sense of miracle achieved. In the moments of frustration and anger—and there are not a few—we all treasure the miracle in our hearts. That is the achievement; being like everybody else everywhere.

We or they? The newcomer like myself who has come here to live finds himself torn between past and present. "They" gradually becomes "We." That is one of the marvels of this place. The act of identification is an exorcism of long centuries of escaping from ourselves. For a Westerner it requires an effort of will that makes continual demands on nerve and mind. I force myself to take the hand of the wretched Jews from Aden. Down the dark corridor of centuries past we went our different ways. I emerged in Glasgow and they at the Southern gateway of Arabia. Now we have come together again in the valley of dry bones. Suddenly there is a great rustling; the skeletons are befleshed; and we stand up as men.

There are terrible moments of awe, of revulsion and naked fear. One such came to me in a room in the Mea Shearim ghetto of Jerusalem, where Hassidim, a fossilized schism of mystics who wear the garb of eighteenth-century Poland, ate bread and herring, drank wine and brandy, as they listened to their Rabbi expound a Talmudic homily, and then broke into chants and dances of such unutterable poignancy that some atavism gripped me, and I found myself intoning and swaying to their sad rhythm, as they circled in slow dance. They are not of Israel, and they still await Messiah, refusing to accede to Jewish temporal power. Yet the strength of their conviction swirling down secular channels made this State.

Are we ceasing to be Westerners? I do not know, but it is clear we shall never be the same again as we were in Diaspora, and that we in Israel are treading a different road from those who remain without the gates. If we have adorned ourselves with the trappings of statehood, the flags and parades and ceremonies, the uniforms and badges, it is not for themselves alone. These rituals give us dignity. They are not the end. We had to take this long step backward in a world where international man has ceased to exist, or is denounced as cosmopolitan. We have been looking backwards for centuries. Now we must look forward, not for the space of a year, but for the generation which will determine the character of a new nation made out of an old people.

A year ago Israel's fate as a nation was poised delicately in the balance of arms. To-day's decision depends on a far wider and more complex range of forces. Battle may be one of them, but at this moment neither Israel nor her neighbours wish to renew the battle. There is so much to be done in the way of nation-building that a renewal of war would disturb or destroy; although no final military decision has been reached, Arab wounds still rankle, and uneasy armistice drags slowly towards insecure peace.

The problems are those of the post-war period everywhere. Here they are enormously accentuated by the tempo of events. They involve people, money, markets, houses. It is not easy for those who are still intoxicated by miracles to grasp the nettle of economic fact. There is a crisis caused by sudden growth, a dyspepsia of ingathering. By the end of the year the population of Israel will be close on a million. Appetite for numbers is stimulated by hard political reasoning as much as by emotion. Only numbers can fill the vacuum of the Negev and of Galilee, and make Israel secure against the fate of Philistia and Carthage. The Jewish memory of David Ben Gurion goes back as far as that. Numbers pose their own problems of housing and resettlement. Sixty thousand newcomers are crammed into the camps left by the British, who paradoxically left a legacy of temporary shelter for the thousands whom they had for so long sought to shut out of the land.

Jews who once called themselves Afghans, Turks, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Germans, Yugoslavs, Poles, Moroccans are living in tents and barracks. They move through the bottleneck of housing into the nation. They grumble, understandably enough, because many of them have now endured camp life for more than ten years, and to come home to a tent in one's own land is dispiriting and demoralising. In addition they meet with some lack of understanding by the older inhabitants, themselves refugees of an earlier decade, who cast doubts on the willingness of the newcomers to aid themselves. But this is the manner of all immigrant countries where each succeeding wave of newcomers meets with the temporary hostility of its predecessors.

The impact of immigration has disturbed the country to its depths. It has imposed an austerity regime, which, if still mild by British standards, will become intensified as the nation grows. It has compelled organised labour to abandon its long-cherished maxim of a day's pay for a day's work and to accept the necessity of piecework rates as an incentive to productivity, for without greater output at lower cost Israel will be unable to export the wide variety of consumers' goods its factories now produce. Economic aid from outside will not go on for ever, and the financial largesse of American Jewry which for so long upheld Palestine's Yishuv is no solid foundation for Israel. Many American businessmen who had hoped to combine sentiment with financial profit have sadly departed from these shores.

We have still to learn many things, and to forget many. In this crucible of nation-making our maturity and sophistication seem to dissolve, and we sometimes behave like rude and noisy children. I think that we have to learn that the State is not an end in itself, but a road towards a good society. We have inherited a terrifying apparatus of administrative law from the Mandate, and our officials sometimes think and act like colonial policemen. Much that is intolerable is excused by the lazy argument of continuing emergency. We still have no Bill of Rights, and our Parliament learns the workings of democracy with infinite slowness. These things must come, and come soon if they are to come at all. The influx of Jews from the Moslem world is weighting the balance against the West. If we do not raise them to our level, we shall decline to theirs.

It would be an unforgivable self-made tragedy if our persistent survival through two thousand years of hell should terminate in a Levantine republic. I observe with sadness the disappearance of the Jewish capacity to doubt, to laugh at oneself, to alternate between pessimism and messianism. If in scraping off the tarnish of exile, we should erase, too, those qualities and values which made us rich contributors to the culture of others, we shall indeed have lost part of ourselves, and the whole world will be poorer for the change we have wrought in ourselves. Our survival is no longer in doubt. The next few years will determine how much more this renascent nation can give humanity.

JACK WINOCOUR

SO THEY SAY . . .

THE second annual report of the National Coal Board, with its disclosure of a small profit and (at last) falling costs, was greeted with very qualified satisfaction by the Conservative national dailies.

Daily Mail, June 23:

COAL IS COSTING LESS TO PRODUCE

Britain's coal production costs are beginning to fall . . . Coal Board chiefs last night were cautiously hopeful that the trend will continue . . .

Daily Telegraph, June 23:

On costs, the claim made in the report that a falling trend has become apparent is not altogether convincing . . .

Daily Express, June 23:

COAL MAKES A PROFIT—BUT HIGH PRICES ARE NOT LIKELY TO COME DOWN

The *Express* then proceeded to cover the report, in its longest news story of the day, without once mentioning the fact that costs had begun to fall. The *Daily Graphic* achieved a similar feat of evasion. The *Daily Herald*, for its part, managed to avoid mentioning the reason behind its headline—"Your coal pits are paying"—which was that the price of domestic coal had gone up 5*s*. a ton, and export prices by 7*s*. a ton.

Rage in Heaven

Pool Promoters' Association:

The people's harmless pastime is victimised while the wealthy gambler goes scot free. The big business gamblers on the Stock Exchange turn over thousands of millions a year. Not a penny of this is taxed.

Financial Times, June 6:

What nonsense these people talk . . I could cry, if a crocodile were near to provide the tears.

Daily Worker, June 18:

Well, let the crocodiles and sharks sort it out among themselves . . .

Picking the Winner

Sunday Pictorial, June 19:

. . . the worst-dressed [woman at Ascot] was Lady Cunliffe-Owen . . .

Evening Standard, June 20:

"Best-dressed women . . . were Princess Margaret and Lady Cunliffe-Owen . . .

The Selective Ear

News Chronicle, June 23:

BOOS (AND CHEERS) FOR CECILY

I never thought to see the day when Cecily Courtneidge would be booed in a London theatre . . .

Daily Mail, June 23:

BOOS—BUT NOT FOR CECILY

Oh, I Say!

Sunday Pictorial, June 26:

Today the "Pictorial" addresses an open letter to the miserable and selfish men and women who have made the return of the sweet ration more than a possibility.

Dear Pigs . . . you greedy guts . . . and your disgusting friends . . . you are a damned disgrace . . . you despicable wretches . . . Chew . . . until your stomachs turn as the very thought of you turns ours. May you be haunted by grotesque nightmares—and may the next bite choke you . . .

Without Comment

Daily Worker, June 24:

What a contrast there is in the treatment by the press over the bombing of the Anchises by the Kuomintang and when the Amethyst and the London were damaged in the Yangtse battle . . .

AUTOLYCUS

CASAMICCIOLA

THE sea-road lined with oleander, a flourish
Of surf at the foot of the breakwater, then only
The blueness unravelled on the beaches of Gaeta . . .
So from this white house, set like an eye
In the hillside with trellising vineyards for hair,
An atmosphere of lemons that dries where
We reach out our fingers, we see the sky's
Slide-rule and filter measuring
The limits of this town—a precise arrangement
Where whatever moves, boys on the quay, fishing boats,
Women, moves within our compass,
A composed canvas on which only we alter.

Ribbed with the heat, the turreted buildings
Blister a siphon blue, a soft pink that melts off churches
Like mosques, then drop to a piazza
Of palms and taxis, with behind them, like wings,
The silhouettes of black, salt-crusted sails
Enclosed in the embrace of the jetty—
A whole town so inseparable from its flared and bright
Colour, that only the oyster evening
Gives it a character, a sense of breathing,
The sunset cuts into like a dripping stiletto.

Half-way up this vined and muzzled hillside,
The skyline a fever chart below which
We watch butterflies and lizards flicker and glide
Like images on a palette, our own life
Grows into this pattern of discriminating living—
Sea, sun, the soft and reciprocal shape
We provide in each other, a face
On the pillow or the sand—as daily
We squeeze out from this bay like a grape
Our northern bitterness, our own appetite for pleasure.

ALAN ROSS.

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Wight

. . . . Come and wander round the maze with me. Following the report of a Royal Commission, we have had splash headlines in the press about our dwindling population. Very well. But we cannot feed the 50,000,000 people we have now. And these people live in a world where there are more and more mouths to feed and fewer and fewer arable acres. Are there splash headlines on these topics? There are not. But, I am told, the danger is that soon we shall have far too many elderly citizens. Very well. Any splash headlines about how little use we are already making of our older men, whose claims for reasonable jobs are being shamefully ignored? Not one. In the meantime, could we increase our food production here? Undoubtedly, but only if we persuaded more people to work on the land (and this would not be difficult) and then immediately built the new houses they would need. Any headlines about that? Not one.

I may be prejudiced, but it always seems to me that editors and sub-editors of popular papers, instead of being up-to-the-minute, are incurably old-fashioned in their outlook. (And this may be why their papers are so popular.) What was good enough for a headline when they were cub reporters is still good enough for a headline. So the Declining Birthrate, which was always a front-page story, remains a front-page story. On the other hand, the world food shortage not only cannot be headlined but must, by fair means or foul (chiefly foul), be so played down that it cannot be accepted as news at all. I have been reading an account from your side of what *Time* did to Vogt's book in its article "Eat Hearty." Something of the same sort happened here: Vogt was exaggerating; the tropics have not really been cultivated yet; science might make a new discovery to-morrow that would change the whole situation; fertilisers (no cost mentioned) had recovered the subsoil; and so on and so forth. Now what is the motive behind all this? Is it mere commercial optimism, the fear of making the average reader uneasy? Is it a dislike of a world crusade that, if given a chance, could take precedence of all our ideological squabbles and the conflicts between power-groups? Or is it sheer blank idiocy?

Your own experience may have been different, but mine is that accuracy is in inverse ratio to the claims and pretensions of the periodical reporting upon my doings. School and college magazines, timid little local papers and the like, generally succeed in printing what I have said and telling their readers the truth about what I may be doing. On this humble level, it is all quite easy—as it ought to be. But when it comes to giant organs of public opinion, papers that will discover the facts no matter what it costs, all reasonable accuracy vanishes. Any nonsense will do. And worst of all, in my limited experience, are those behind-the-scenes sheets, those the-low-down-for-subscribers-only letters, which blunder about wildly in a fog of legend and monstrous conjecture. I cannot explain this. The longer I live, the less I can explain. You will remember that when we first met, I was ready to explain everything.

Last Sunday night, after dinner with some company, I struck a noble blow for our profession. A publisher, an old friend of mine, was present, and after answering some questions about publishing, he said: "Of course authors have a sense of their own importance." This was greeted by the usual titter; but I felt that I had heard it just once too often, and so intervened. "No doubt they have," I told him. "But what about publishers? I'm thinking now—and I ask you to do the same—of a dozen heads of large publishing houses. And I can't think of a dozen writers who could match them in self-importance." And my friend, shaken by this image of a dozen rivals, solemn as doges, admitted that I was right. Thus heartened (and the heroic narrative tone is inevitable), I struck a further blow for us. For years and years, I pointed out, I had read satirical accounts of literary parties, all crammed with authors who talked about nothing but their sales, their royalties, their earnings and fame. Yet after nearly thirty years of a literary life, I went on, I had never yet once found myself among such authors. Not only not in public but not even in private. I did not know the sales, royalties, earnings, of colleagues of mine who were also intimate friends. In fact, I bellowed, of all professional people, it seemed to me that authors talked least about themselves and their transactions. Hurrah!

Yes, Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* is attracting much attention here too, though less, I imagine, than it is with you. (Incidentally, he is ill—and here's wishing him a quick recovery.) Satires of this sort leave me wondering and worried. With their central point of view, I have no quarrel; and have already got into trouble by pointing out that the general drift of our time, working through all our different political-economic systems, is profoundly anti-democratic, more and more of us being herded like sheep. (The quarrel is about how and by whom we shall be herded, and not about the herding itself.) To show what is happening here and now would do nothing but good. A satirical novel of contemporary life, throwing into sharp relief the frustrations and sly tyrannies of our own day, would be immensely valuable. But I find myself wondering whether these darkly pessimistic fantasies of the future do not do more harm than good. I suspect they leave most of their readers vaguely depressed, but not convinced that we are all going the wrong way. It is all too fantastic, and not gaily fantastic but depressingly so. Their authors exhibit too much disgust—and for something that is, after all, their own daydream—and so the ordinary reader, who is not in the highest spirits himself, gets rid of his uneasiness by deciding that these authors are not telling him what is wrong with the world but what is wrong with themselves. The magnification and distortion defeat themselves. If the satire came closer, nearer home, it would be far more effective. Our minds shake off these fantasies as they would a bad dream.

And then—all this disgust. There is far too much of it about. A powerful writer like Orwell or Huxley merely adds to the general stock. (Too much of our literature now is like the branches of arithmetic at the Mock Turtle's school—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision.) And still more disgust does not help. Like the satirists we are anxious that people should not allow themselves to be turned into robots. But I fancy that people who feel more and more depressed and disgusted are more easily turned into robots than lively and buoyant folk. The savage and gloomy satirist does his best work when the age itself is smugly complacent. If our age is smugly complacent, then I for one am clean out of touch with it. Most intelligent people now are secretly divided between anxiety and despair. They have fallen out of love with this world and no longer believe in any other. They may chatter and guffaw and order another round of drinks, but inwardly they wince and bleed. Then along comes a tortured literary

chap, who cries: "Wait a minute, everybody! You don't know the half of it yet. Listen to this!" And the sensitive souls find themselves with a new nightmare, hating life harder than ever. Whereas a little gaiety, some belief in our ability to enrich and enoble our existence, might help to sweep away any threat of a robot world. Swift was all very well when Queen Anne was alive. But now she is dead, and I do not believe we want any more Swifts. While we laugh and hoot at all our oppressors, we should be falling in love with life again, seeing it ripen like an apple on the bough. We should feel that our satirist points and jeers because he is healthier and wealthier in mind and heart than we are. It is a new Rabelais and not another Swift we need now.

Looking across my desk, I have just noticed an advertisement for a course of lectures, lasting a week, on "The British Way of Life." There are bold men among us. For my part I would sooner undertake to lecture for a week on Cookery in the Assyrian Empire. If we British at this moment have a Way of Life, then I know no more about it than a housewife in Kamchatka. The only pronouncement I could make with any confidence about our Way of Life is that at present it seems to me to be invisible in the stewpot. From the West we look Red, from the East we look Blue. We are revolutionaries who have not swept away anything. We are Tories loudly denouncing taxes and regulations chiefly invented by Tory Ministers. We are Socialists busy creating peers and cheering pretty princesses. We are a dreary self-righteous people with a passion for gin, tobacco, gambling and ballet. We are a nation of Sabbath-keepers who do not go to church. We toil to keep ourselves alive, with three tea-breaks, a five-day week, and Wednesday afternoon off for the match. We spend so much time arguing about food, we have no time to cook it properly. We spend fourpence on our culture and several million pounds a year advertising it. We get free spectacles and false teeth and, for lack of hospital beds, may die in a ditch. We have probably the best children and the dullest adults in Europe. We are a Socialist-Monarchy that is really the last monument of Liberalism. We are so regimented and imprisoned that our rich newspaper proprietors, while visiting New York, the West Indies or South Africa, get really angry about it. And never in our history have we been more despised—by fools, or respected—by wise men. But a Way of Life?

J. B. PRIESTLEY

THE SHOW'S THE THING

WE are faced in the near future with the problem of building new theatres, new concert halls and opera houses. To this end, committees are appointed, architects and acoustic experts chosen and instructed, equipment ordered. The procedure in the past has then been to wait and see what we get. Well! And who is responsible for what we have got? This question has been burked. Some results are acclaimed as excellent; some are acknowledged as failures. What is meant by excellent? The phrase is used and quoted by the general public without any precise meaning. In any case there is practically no knowledge in this country of theatre building. Theatres are generally thought of as the auditoria only. But it is the stage which matters. If the performance is good enough, the audience will stand to see it. Who is responsible, and for what?

The first point is to decide the purpose of the building. Seating capacity involves problems of its own, but is not the main purpose. The all-important purpose is what is going to be done in the building, that is, done in every aspect of the work. Every aspect of the work—and this is largely technical—has to be decided before you start. Who is to decide this? Who has the knowledge? How do you know he has the knowledge? Most commercial theatres in this country are deplorably deficient in equipment. There is no journal of stage technology in English. English producers have not used stage equipment except of an elementary kind. Acoustics have made advances; but what is meant by "good" acoustics? In what way are they good? There is no British Acoustical Society. An acoustic examination of existing buildings has not been published—if indeed it has been made.

Plans and models are prepared for new theatres, and the comment is made: "That is a pretty big stage." But big for what? It may be big by English standards; but big for what purpose? It may be too big for the actual purpose. We cannot start until we know how it is to be used, what equipment is to be used. This must be decided first, before the architect is instructed. Who is responsible? In the pre-war Hamburg opera house the stage holding the scenery and including the overhead lighting was repeated seven times—once on either side, once upstage—and then all four positions were repeated thirty feet lower, making a total of eight similar stages, which could be presented to the audience by an operator pressing one of eight buttons. The stages slid into position and the new scene was ready. The staff who had set them were sent home at tea-time. In England there are one or two examples of rotating stages. If St. Paul's rotates in front of you, the back of it cannot be made into a scene on the sea shore. The sea shore is not used to having a St. Paul's on it. It is obvious that the sliding stage equipment must be decided before the stage is designed.

A modern stage requires a cyclorama which acts as the sky. The sky is enormous. It cannot be put on castors and be twenty feet high, as at Stratford. It surrounds the scenery and is therefore curved. If made of cloth, it is blown by draughts, and in any case obstinately decides to hang in folds, as at Covent Garden; and the folds at the sides persist in being visible. The cyclorama must be far enough from the lighting equipment to be lit without allowing the scenery to throw its shadows on it. It cannot therefore be placed half-way back on the stage, as in the model for the new Oxford theatre. The curved part of the cyclorama should be solid; its tails can be of cloth and straight.

Where is the apparatus for controlling the lighting to be placed? The controllers—and there are several of them—must be able to see the stage and the auditorium. That prevents the apparatus being placed on the stage, as it was in the past. If a form of distant control is used, a complication is introduced which can go wrong. If the usual English apparatus for dimming the stage lights is used, a large room is required. If the modern system—unknown to our commercial theatres—is used, a small room is required. If I remember rightly, no room at all was included in the model of the new Oxford theatre. The English theatres are wasting in the dimmers as much electricity as they use in the lights. The modern method wastes 2 per cent. Are magic lanterns to be used to project scenery instead of painting huge sheets of canvas? Lighting is probably the most important problem on the stage. There are many points of lesser importance, but sliding stage, cyclorama and lighting are the fundamentals. All this must be decided before the architect is appointed, and decided by people familiar with the actual working of such equipment.

The purpose of each building must be decided before a start is made, followed by the details of the equipment which will provide the results desired, in consultation with the equipment expert. The architect and acoustic expert are then appointed and building begins; but here appears a most important point. It is not a question of waiting till all is finished and then asking "What have we got?" Tests followed by adjustments and even some actual reconstruction may be necessary before the decoration is finished. The tests must be thorough, and the final test should be music. Intuition, reasoning, and, most important of all, common sense are needed in the final adjustment. For music or for speech, the aoustics should be the same when the building is empty or full.

Now comes the fundamental issue. How are results to be achieved? The ordinary method is to appoint prominent persons to a Committee or Council or Trust, and these in turn appoint one or two experts and await the results. This is not good enough: we have had too many failures; we have been far too uncritical. Responsibility cannot be shelved by the Committee, Council or Trust, who are the employers. How can they choose their experts without knowing the work themselves? How can they instruct their experts without this knowledge? It is no good blaming the architect or the acoustic expert after the wrong building has been erected. The architect's building provides the seats and does not fall down. He has shown plans and drawings of its appearance, but the building fails in the purpose for which it was built. The architect is not responsible for the execution of this purpose. He has shown his designs and the employers have accepted them. It is they and they alone who are responsible.

The Arts Council should now be taking a hand in this work. The municipal and State theatres and halls can obviously not be left to the local Corporation and the local architect. These will need advice, so that as employers they can, by collaboration with the Arts Council, know the purpose and the way to achieve it. To this end, apparatus is needed which is neither made nor known in this country (except in one instance) and which could be made by us to be used here and exported to America, who also have no knowledge of these matters. But little has been done. In 1934, Covent Garden spent £18,000 on relighting. Two directors refused even to come and see the new system of control. Since then, Germany and Russia turned out what Covent Garden put in, and put in the new system. Until quite recently no theatre owners or architects have been to see the new system. In fact, they don't know it is here.

JOHN CHRISTIE

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From the "New Statesman" of July, 1924.

New Towns.

The directors of Welwyn are convinced that the satellite town on the garden city system is the only practicable alternative to the continued increase of great cities, from the congestion of which come the difficulties of transport and housing, and from which all the great cities of the world suffer to-day, and the financial and social consequences of which are throwing an ever-increasing burden on industry while they tend to reduce the health and stamina of the people.

Old Faithful.

I am afraid the Conference on the Channel Tunnel has finished that interesting idea, at least until science had contributed a further simplification of its problem. Apparently all—statesmen, soldiers, sailors, airmen and commercials—were against it.

The Arts and Entertainment

G.B.S. AND CYMBELINE

Cymbeline when Irving put it on drew from Bernard Shaw one of the most brilliant and provocative of his dramatic criticisms. It was in this notice that appeared the much misquoted remark: "With the single exception of Homer, there is no eminent writer, not even Sir Walter Scott, whom I can despise so entirely as I despise Shakespeare when I measure my mind against his." This sentence is very typical of Shaw's gift for calculated irritation. It is intellect considered apart, if that is possible, from imagination, that he is measuring; the judgement, differently expressed and read in its place in the argument, would have commanded so easy an acceptance that it might hardly have been noticed. But, inserted in a squib, it is timed to explode out of its context under the nodding noses of the Bardolaters. The whole article, indeed, is a sustained and scintillating example of this gift. It may be read in full in the second volume of *Our Theatre in the Nineties*, lately republished in a standard edition of the works of Shaw (*Constable*, three volumes, 7*s*. 6*d*. each), still one of the most instructive as well as entertaining books on the theatre that I know.

In a preface Shaw describes his dramatic criticism as:

> not a series of judgements aimed at impartiality, but a siege laid to the theatre of the nineteenth century by an author who had to cut his own way into it at the point of the pen, and throw some of its defenders into the moat.

He rode in on a chariot drawn by two horses, Ibsen and Wagner; but when he reached the citadel it was his own flag that he planted, and at his feet lay the two princes of the enemy, Sardoodledum and Bardolatry. They were stunned, not killed: they both lived, to breed a quite vigorous progeny of traitors who are active among us to this day.

Sardoodledum was the well-made play with its false attitudes, tailored to the conventional styles of the time. Bardolatry consisted in the indiscriminating worship of Shakespeare, notably as a philosopher and psychologist. His claim to the title of philosopher Shaw easily showed as being nothing more than the ordinary poet's gift (ordinary, that is, up to this century) of expressing the moral commonplaces memorably. As for his claim to the title of psychologist, one had only to compare him with Ibsen to see at once that the claim was invalid.

The comparison with Ibsen contained an obvious false argument, though this does not invalidate his criticism of the Bardolaters. Considered as Ibsen plays, of course Shakespeare's looked psychologically jejune. But then the Elizabethans did not aim at that coherent probability which is the mark of the Ibsen and post-Ibsen drama: where the events and the order of events spring from, and remain closely related to, the characters of the play. Shakespeare was not writing psychological drama. In his century—perhaps because events seemed altogether more haphazard in real life—the audience did not make much distinction between the possible and the impossible, much less (as we do) between the possible and the probable. They appear to have accepted quite cheerfully almost any action that the artificial plot put up and to have been content to watch and hear how the resulting situation developed, scene by scene. But that does not mean that Shakespeare has not a title to being a psychologist in a quite different sense—as one having a quite extraordinary freedom of communication between the unconscious and the conscious, so that the order and nature of his incidents, as well as his imagery, have a "rightness" which we can often feel without logically apprehending it.

Needless to say, though, it was not on any such grounds that the Bardolaters believed in the Bard. For them the text had something of the sanctity of scripture (the Works were often bound to look like Bibles), and any criticism was blasphemy. We can imagine the shock which Shaw's second sentence on *Cymbeline* would cause, even though Johnson had not been much milder:

> It is for the most part stagey trash of the lowest melodramatic order, in parts abominably written, throughout intellectually vulgar and, judged in point of thought by modern intellectual standards, vulgar, foolish, offensive, indecent and exasperating beyond all tolerance . . .

But Shaw did not, of course, in the end, judge Shakespeare "in point of thought by modern intellectual standards." His criticism is never destructive for destruction's sake. What he hacks away is dead matter, received ideas, pious assumptions, decayed romanticism. But what remains, when the plaster is peeled off, is solid enough:

> His gift of telling a story (provided someone else told it to him first); his enormous power over language, as conspicuous in his senseless and silly abuse of it as in his miracles of expression; his humour; his sense of idiosyncratic character; and his prodigious fund of that vital energy which is, it seems, the true differentiating property behind the faculties, good, bad and indifferent, of the man of genius.

To read this collection of dramatic criticisms, which are as astute in their analyses of the details of production and acting as they are provoking in their statements of general principles, is itself the beginning of an education in drama. Only Mr. Desmond MacCarthy's collection (and this, absurdly, is out of print) come up to them for range and insight. Agate, for instance, who had an unrivalled eye for, and love of, acting, was limited by the exclusiveness of his interest in the theatre. His notions of life were as theatrical as most of his evenings; it was this that made him a very unreliable judge of a play. Shaw takes the theatre much more seriously, as an aspect, but a very important aspect, of life. He considered it "as important as the Church was in the Middle Ages and much more important than the Church was in London in the years under review." He took it seriously "as a factory of thought, a prompter of conscience, an elucidation of social conduct, an armoury against despair and dullness, and a temple of the Ascent of Man."

The theatre badly needs, as it always will, someone to take it as seriously as that again; someone with a clear knowledge of where it ought to be going, of what it ought to get rid of and, above all, of what to put in the place of what he proposes to laugh off the stage. For it was this absolute conviction about what he wanted, and what he was going to force the theatre to take from him, that gave Shaw's notices both the edge that cut through so much cant and the high spirits which, in the main, saved him from giving offence beyond what could be forgiven.

Cymbeline is now added to the repertoire at Stratford. It is the least successful of this season's productions. The play itself, quite apart from Shaw's objections to it on grounds of taste, is one of the plays with the smallest measure of coherent probability in it. It is a curious muddle and cannot be held together; it can only be played scene by scene for the effect of each of them by themselves (and how lovely some of them are!). But Mr. Michael Benthall, the producer, cannot resist his natural impulse, which is to ravel up for us the complexities, subordinate the detail to the whole, and compel us forward by the sheer power of his pace. *Cymbeline* won't submit to this treatment. A kind of unity is imposed, with the help of characteristic designs by Mr. Leslie Hurry, but the details suffer cruelly in a play where only details—or rather only some of the details—count. At least two of the parts seemed to me completely misconceived. The "beef-witted" Cloten, a sort of mindless boastful Rugby forward, is played here as a latter-day neurotic, with gangling elbows and a speech impediment. Mr. William Squire sustains the conception well enough, but it strikes me as a very unhappy one. Then Mr. Harry Andrews' power and weight are thrown away in a portrait of the faithful retainer Pisanio, which appears to have been modelled on Firs of *The Cherry Orchard*, all dodder and dangle. The effect of the whole is of being out of scale. The play itself has no strong centre to stand up to the large-scale production which the Stratford stage imposes: and such centre as there is is in the hands of young actors and a young actress who are not yet able to give it the weight that is there. They are, as I said of them earlier, a good supporting cast. Where they have no one to support but themselves, the result is a little dim. Whether, on the other hand, a much simpler production would have made it easier for them, or whether it would merely have shown up their deficiencies more bleakly, one cannot absolutely say. At least in the production as it is there are many of the visual pleasures which we have come to expect at Stratford.

T. C. WORSLEY

TELEVISION NOTES

THERE has recently broken out in several newspapers a considerable clamour for putting Television under new management, and detaching it altogether from the dominion of the B.B.C. This notion seems to me premature, and its discussion might well be postponed in favour of more urgent items on the agenda. Of these the most obvious is the poor quality of so much of the output, and the apparent slowness of producers to acquire anything like a mastery of their medium. In two departments Television is doing well. Its Outside Broadcasts are excellent, its plays on the whole very good. But the rest, for the most part, seems as tentative, maladroit and amateur as it was (with ample reason) in the brief pre-war period of trial and error. One field in which matters go from bad to worse is that of the Illustrated Talk, such as the one lately delivered on the Munich Pictures. The major defect of this inept performance was that the expositor could not achieve a free flow of exact and shapely comment on the pictures he was holding up to our gaze. He could not really extemporise, and what he gave us was merely verbal vamping. He never found the illuminating epithet, and rarely produced a whole or coherent sentence. The only remedy is to require talkers—or most of them—to memorise their script as an actor does. The reliance on the inspiration of the moment will not do, except for the handful who have a ready and relevant tongue in their heads. I dislike, too, the tiresome habit (employed in this programme) of introducing the Common Man to exchange fruitless back-chat with the Master of Ceremonies. However well-intentioned it may be, this is a snob-tactic.

One must sympathise with those limitations of space and time at Alexandra Palace which allow a production about as much time for rehearsal as we might give to preparing a charade for a Christmas party. But to explain is not to extenuate, and the lamentable fact remains that far too many Talks and Magazines are disfigured by fumbled cues, halting phrases, muddled explanations, and transparent stratagems. I noticed one brilliant exception, this month, the feature on Longleat, lately opened to the public by Lord Bath. An excellent script (by Christopher Hussey) had been prepared for this programme, and Lord and Lady Bath had evidently been at some pains to memorise their lines and to speak them with precision and sincerity. It was a great pleasure to observe such quality of preparation and performance after so many make-do-and-mend productions.

Is Televised Ballet finding its feet at last? One of its customary weaknesses has been the endeavour to deploy the *corps de ballet* on its miniature screen, an effort as ill-directed as marshalling a herd of camels through the needle's eye. But how enchanting ballet can be when it is content to give us solo dances and *pas de deux*, and thus it was, for a flawless half-hour, when Massine, Danilova, Beriosova and Frederick Franklin danced the right bits from *Le Lac des Cygnes* and *La Boutique Fantasque*. Let me add,

too, that Television's usual vulgarity of decor was, on this occasion, put to shame by Stephen Bundy's beautiful settings.

Outside Broadcasts continue to score the major successes, even apart from Wimbledon and Lords. One of the recent best was *At Holly Hill Farm*, a monthly visit (under the amiable guidance of F. H. Grisewood) to a Hertfordshire farm to observe the routine of the country calendar. Nothing takes more easily to the screen than these evening pastorals. The sheep never seem to miss their cues, the farm dogs grin more naturally before a camera than human beings do, the whole scene is intimate and placid. I hope the Mobile Units will be sent on many such outdoor missions this summer, for they never seem to put a foot wrong.

W. E. WILLIAMS

THE MOVIES

"Louisiana Story," at the Rialto
"Paysans Noirs," at the Curzon
"Kind Hearts and Coronets," at the Leicester Square

Everyone who enjoys films, and those who commonly do not, should make a point of visiting the Rialto to see Robert Flaherty's *Louisiana Story*. It is sheer delight; so—one might fancy, coming away—so, naturally, beautifully, inquisitively, the camera might choose to behave if it had a life of its own. It attaches itself here, like a dog or a companion, to a French-Canadian boy in a canoe threading the forest marshes of South Louisiana; the light drips down, the summer branches depend, in the dark waters there is a mysterious uprush of bubbles (mermaids?) or the familiar crocodile's shadow. To the boy, and to us, everything is an enchantment. He carries charms: a small bag of salt dangling at the waist and a bright toad next the skin. He will steal crocodile eggs, and even entice the monster itself with four pounds of flesh on a meat-hook at a rope's end. Everywhere with him he takes his pet raccoon, as eager as himself. He will hunt. He will explore. He will navigate the river that rushes past these quiet waterways. When, instead of the roaring crocodile, a bulldozer crashes through the reeds, he is even more fascinated, and goes on to find a floating oil derrick anchored in midstream, with a tower a hundred feet high and a deep plunge into the river-bed. It plays the part in his childhood that a visiting circus does for a town-bred urchin. Every day his voyages take him to the foreign raft, to the men astonishingly expert and devout in their alacrity, or looking over the rail with easy smiles when the machinery can manage itself. *Louisiana Story* is simply the record of this infatuation, of the wild landscape, of a trapper's childhood, of the boy himself and his father and their cabin at the water's edge. Flaherty wonderfully surprises the sights and adventures of such a life, with its reveries caught into action. No other film I have seen quite equals its freshness of feeling—not even *Moana*, that idyll of Flaherty's own, made twenty-four years ago, and due surely for revival. You will find perhaps a similar feeling in some of Mr. David Garnett's books: he also has brought together the prose and poetry of simple lives, of nature and the grand machine.

So fittingly and unobtrusively made is the whole piece that one never thinks to pick and choose among the several skills displayed. The half-dozen or so people acting their own lives—is it they or their director who has brought to the screen such unselfconscious grace? The boy himself (Joseph Boudreaux) seems by his looks and actions to tell everything about a shy, sly, marvel-filled childhood. Then the depth and beauty of landscape—how much does that owe to camera work, to the sound track, rich and chary of speech, and to the lovely score of Mr. Virgil Thompson? What part, in such sequences as the long struggle with the crocodile and the plunging of the oil shafts, has been played by that little-known hand, the editor's? The answer, I suppose, is that, under the inspiration of Flaherty, they work together as this master of his craft would wish. This seems to me, as it will probably seem to others, his best film.

After *Louisiana Story*, the other pieces look unnaturally dull. *Paysans Noirs* is a fair documentary, with some attractive glimpses of Nigerian native life, about White hopes and groundnuts; and in *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, the English have managed to produce, for once, a witty film. This tale (from Ealing Studios) of an Edwardian poor relation, who sets out to obliterate the eight or nine persons standing between himself and a Dukedom, owes a little to Wilde and more than a little to *Le Roman d'un Tricheur*. Mr. Alec Guinness, playing all nine of the doomed ducal family, rivals Guitry's own prestidigitation, and the narrative often matches his ruthless urbanity. Its faults are that it sometimes lapses into seriousness, and more often into dumb-show illustration, and that Mr. Dennis Price's manner and lines do not sparkle quite as they should. It remains, however, thanks to the script of Messrs. John Dighton and Robert Hamer—and the latter's direction—a film that will puncture here and there the torpor of audiences.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Mark Gertler, at the Whitechapel Art Gallery.

This is an interesting memorial exhibition of the talented Jewish artist, who committed suicide in 1938. Among mixed bunches of gently painted pictures, his work has often seemed uncomfortably garish and overdone—vulgar in the wrong way; but at last we have him on his own, so we can trace his development, discern his qualities and his faults, and understand his ultimate failure to express all that he wanted to. We can see first how the painting of Renoir worked on him. This was the most formative influence on his style and one that predominated all his life (but where Renoir's nudes are soft, sensuous and lyrical like roses or peonies, Gertler's are as stiff and crude as zinnias made from felt). Then he passed through a sort of blue period, painting East End Jewry (Nos. 8 and 10); then Seurat's discoveries were reflected in his work (e.g., *The Roundabout*, No. 18); and, much later, the experiments of the School of Paris occasionally gave his vision a slight abstract twist. He never managed to weld these various manners into a really useful style, capable of helping a painter to solve his problems—for two reasons: because his technique was nowhere near good enough to carry out the pictures which he had in his mind (he used paint hastily, drew insensitively and had a misguided sense of colour); and because he was unable to transcend, as the Fauves did—as Matthew Smith does—the vulgar manner, which might have been his glory. An artist should by all means paint like a roundabout decorator, if he can get away with it; somehow Gertler never could. One gets the impression from these pictures of a man with a great deal to say, baffled by not having a language to say it in, yet without sufficient linguistic ability to learn one. Only occasionally, as in the early and celebrated picture of his mother (No. 5), does he make an important statement. Otherwise he is an interesting failure. Perhaps the influence of Roger Fry was too strong in the end.

Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo, at Covent Garden.

Neither in ballet nor in opera does a group of stars excuse an otherwise poor company. The brilliance of the chief *dansers* will only emphasise the dimness of the *corps de ballet*. Certainly the *maître de ballet*, Mr. John Taras has improved the quality of the company since we last saw it, but they still seem a bit slip-shod and undisciplined, as if they were amateurishly managed. This indifferent framing does not show off Toumanova, Hightower or Eglevsky with any of the *panache* they require; it is sad that such diamonds as these should be set in pinchbeck. . . . After the mousey gestures of so many native dancers, it is exciting to see a *ballerina assoluta* of the great tradition. Heaven knows Toumanova shows off, is mannered—but a mannerist on this scale is very exciting. One does not mind that in *Swan Lake* the orchestra follows her anxiously rather as if she were a curvetting circus horse; they slow down, almost stop, making nonsense of the music, so that she can demonstrate a piece of technical virtuosity. We relish it all, because everything she does is informed with lyrical feeling. On the other hand Rosella Hightower's dancing lacks this very quality; we cannot really relish it. She gives a staggering exhibition of skill in the *Black Swan*, but one longs for a Doctor Coppelius to breathe life in this magnificent automaton—then she might well be the greatest dancer alive. Eglevsky thrills us as always with his triumphant fusion of athleticism and poetry. Among the other principals, Lichine and Riabuchinska dance together in *Beau Danube* with Massine—as ubiquitous as a commercial traveller (what a shame that he divides his loyalty between so many companies!); while Skibine, Tallchief and Pagava (once of the Ballets des Champs-Elysées) make the most of *Night Shadows*, one of Balanchine's less successful creations in a fashionably neo-Romantic vein, performed to a terrible mince of Bellini's magnificent *Sonnambula* music.

"Her Excellency," at the Hippodrome

This new musical play with Miss Cicely Courtneidge is mild—but by no means feeble. Miss Courtneidge is our first woman Ambassadress to the Argentine sent out to secure a meat contract. This should have provided, besides the setting, two sufficient sources of humour, but the authors have only skirted each. The subject is evidently too near the bone for them to allow their fantasy its fling. And without a happy carelessness in fantasy, a musical play is nothing; the deficiency is the more marked here because there is too little music and, such as there is, nothing that remotely sounds like a voice to sing it—even through the battery of loudspeakers. It is left to Miss Courtneidge to carry the show, a task which she sets about in her usual inimitable style—by repeatedly dropping it with a bump. Miss Courtneidge is the mistress of the "throw away": from this all her humour derives. She builds up brilliantly to her moments of bathos, and times the abrupt descent to a split second; she begins as the most arrogant of matadors and ends tickling the bull's tummy with tears pouring from her eyes. What is really missing (for Mr. Thorley Walters and Mr. Patrick Barr are only allowed to aid and abet) is some strong contrast to her display of virtuosity which, by great technical finish, achieves the air of the most haphazard amateurishness. One can have too much of the casual. The final impression is of a meandering English ancedote with the point missing. An American might call it dumsey for it has none of the evanescence of the new-style musical. Still lemonade not fizzy, soothing rather than stimulating: but made of wholesome fruit and sugar—not citric acid.

Harpo and Chico Marx, at the Palladium

Ordinary comedians have to work hard for their laughs. Sometimes they work us hard too. It is the prerogative of the greater clowns that, as well as making us laugh, they also confer an unexpected sense of peace. This was very noticeable at the Palladium when Harpo and Chico came on. The edge of raucousness in this packed house faded; it was as if some mild collective sedative had been administered. Sedation is not to be confused with boredom. We were stretched out upon a more comfortable couch of comedy and ceased to fidget either for jokes or cigarettes. A trance-like absorption with faces, clothes, movements; for example, the primitive concentration of Harpo's forearms and wrists, as he attacked his harp with a plumber's executive vigour. Some part of this absorption, no doubt, was due to the fabulous name of the brothers. But not all. They possess, in themselves, personalities whose presence envelops an audience. Harpo and Chico have no proper act, their exits and entrances appear inconsequent, unpremeditated, often downright clumsy. It is true that we miss Groucho—but too much has been made of that. True, also, that Chico's patter is not, on the whole, very funny, and that he is, perhaps, the weaker of the two, as a stage-performer. Yet one would be glad not to see the last of them. (Chico disclosed that they have just finished a new film.) A word of praise for Mr. Harold Barnes's *Boogie to Ballet on the Tight Wire*. This was attractive, even beautiful at moments, besides being a dazzling feat of balance.

Correspondence

LORD MILVERTON

Sir,—I am a Jamaican and was in Jamaica until 1942, during a part of the term when Lord Milverton (then, Sir Arthur Richards) was Governor. He spent much of his great energy in fighting Mr. N. W. Manley, K.C., and the People's National Party, the only Socialist party which has tried to emerge under the new Jamaican constitution; and he made no secret of his contempt for Socialism. In one speech during 1942 he used the words, "Throughout Europe the ideals of Socialism lie in ruins." He was never tolerant to opinions with which he disagreed and steps had to be taken by local people to obtain support from the Colonial Office in Britain to free from gaol a number of Socialists and others who had been imprisoned on his orders under the National Defence Act.

Whilst I personally agree with his opinions on the nationalisation of steel I think it is a pity that this cause should have been championed by one whose "Socialism" seems to have commenced only after the last General Election and just before his elevation to the Peerage. One must hope that his expressed belief in freedom will be of a more permanent nature. There were many in Jamaica who did their best to educate him in this direction.

38 Cliffords Inn, E.C.4. MORRIS CARGILL

COLOURED COLONIALS

SIR,—During "Colonial Month" when the Government is trying to educate the public on problems of the Colonies, it seems appropriate that attention should also be drawn to the plight of men from West Africa, the Western Pacific Islands and the West Indies, who for the last six years have been coming in increasing numbers to East London, to obtain work on shore and settle here for a long period.

These men have spent their early lives under conditions utterly different from the mechanised industrial system they find when they dock in Britain, and they are all in need of expert help and guidance. In East London the Colonial Office recognised some responsibility for their welfare by the establishment of Colonial House in Leman St., Stepney. This consists of a dormitory where twelve men can sleep in bunks, without privacy, a recreation room (with a billiard table, a piano and a few chairs) and a basement kitchen, rented by a caterer who provides meals. The building is sordid and inadequate, but it is all that the Colonial Office provides for coloured colonials (outside the student category) in the greatest city in our Commonwealth. The men do not forget that the Commonwealth owes its survival in part at least to the efforts made by them and their fellow-countrymen in the last war.

The twelve bunks do little to solve the problem of sleeping accommodation needed for these immigrants. They are forced to search for living room in an area where prostitutes abound and where alternative accommodation in respectable houses is almost unobtainable. The men congregate in large numbers in Colonial House in their free time, and lacking any provision or space for recreation they are driven to gambling. Last January Colonial House was raided by the police on a Saturday afternoon, and the following Monday, 52 coloured colonials were charged at our local Magistrates Court with being on premises used for the purpose of gambling.

The Colonial Office is acutely conscious of the shortcomings of their provision and for some years searched hard for premises in which a worthy Hostel and Club could be housed. A year ago, ideal premises were found. The Colonial Office then discovered that they had no power to spend money for this purpose. The majority of men involved are not now seamen. They are resident in England and so, by the letter of the law, they are not the concern of the Colonial Office. This is a Treasury ruling and the Treasury is adamant.

What happens in London has repercussions throughout the Commonwealth. It is true that in Stepney excellent work has been done by the Employment Exchange and it is true too that the various Government Departments concerned have a "high-level committee" considering policy. But Hostel and Club accommodation is fundamental, and while, until recently, action was promised, now even that hope has been destroyed.

Some of these coloured colonials have established themselves as skilled and reliable workmen, respected by all who know them. Others who arrived here, eager to succeed, are now society's rejects, having learned nothing but evil from their stay in East London. These tragic (and costly) failures are the direct result of the absence of a good Hostel and proper welfare organisation.

May I in conclusion quote from the speech of the King when he opened the Colonial Exhibition: "We in the United Kingdom regard it as a high privilege to welcome men and women who come here for study, business or recreation. They are our fellow-citizens, and we want them to feel at home here and to profit by their stay among us." These words are profoundly true. Is it too much to hope that action will be taken in East London to implement them? EDITH RAMSEY

51 College Buildings, E.1.

TIED COTTAGES

SIR,—The evil of the tied cottage system arises from the power of an individual farmer to evict his former employee without providing him with the alternative accommodation which must be provided in the case of the ordinary protected tenancy. Once this power were removed, there would be no objection to the houses remaining tied to the agricultural industry either in the manner suggested by Mr. Bellairs or in some other way. Sheila Newsome only confuses the issue and makes a bad point when she suggests that the result of abolishing the system would be that "cottages belonging to the farming community are to pass out of their hands into those of men and women who do not work on the land."

Of course farmers will be inconvenienced by the abolition of the system but this inconvenience is always seriously overstated. The real difficulty is limited to certain trades—of which the cowman is the main example—where the need to work odd hours and broken shifts makes it essential that the worker should live on top of his job, and even then serious difficulty would only arise where the farm is completely isolated. To listen to the average farmer on this question one would get the impression that British agriculture does nothing but produce milk on remote moorlands.

Sheila Newsome seems to argue that the tied cottage system encourages workers to stay in agriculture In fact, that system is one of the biggest deterrents to the recruitment of fresh labour and a main cause of labour leaving the land. I have repeatedly been told by evicted workers—particularly tractor drivers and the more mechanically-minded farm workers for whose services industrial competition is greatest—that they "have lived in their last tied cottage" and are getting a job off the land.

The Prime Minister or the King or anyone else who, according to Mr. Guinness, also suffers from the tied cottage system have their remedy; they too can agitate through their Trade Unions for abolition. The fact that they suffer their grievous wrongs in silence is scarcely relevant as an argument against the less stoical farmworker.

Even more than your other farmer correspondents, Mr. Guinness demonstrates the misplaced self-righteousness of the farming community. He bought cottages with protected tenants already in them and then complains because he may not turn them out of house and home with nowhere else to go! The imagination boggles at his impudence. In point of fact—one of the criticisms in my article—he could have done so had he satisfied the Agriculture Executive Committee that the cottages were necessary for the efficient running of his farm: apparently he was unable to do so.

The fact that farmworkers advertise for a job with a house does not mean that they "have few doubts" on the system; it simply means that they are in process of eviction from another tied cottage and have to find a fresh house to go to with the new job.

Your correspondents are perfectly right to emphasise the need for more rural houses, but until they are built

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the Labour Movement has to decide where the greater hardship lies and act accordingly. Last week a case came to my attention which I cite as typical of the sort of thing which is happening over and over again in our countryside. A farm labourer, aged 70, had worked for the same farmer for 25 years and had never lost a day's work. When his son was old enough he too worked on the farm, father and son living together in a tied cottage. Eventually the son decided to get married and set up his own home, moved and got a job elsewhere. The farmer thereupon decided, to quote Eileen Guy's words, that the father had "proved unsatisfactory," sacked him, and has got an eviction order against the old gentleman.

Sheila Newsome would support this farmer's action, for she says "the criterion by which to judge the tied cottage system is whether it contributes to this end (increased productivity) or impedes it."

Even accepting her criterion, the case against abolition is by no means a strong one, but why on earth should we be expected to accept it? It is the criterion on which Nassau Senior based his case against the Ten Hour Day for factory children, that the cotton planters used to support slavery, that is trotted out to justify any piece of economic and social oppression.

O. H. PARSONS

DIVORCE REFORM

SIR,—We are supporters of the Marriage Law Reform Committee who have been assisting Col. Marcus Lipton, M.P., in connection with his amendment to the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. His amendment would provide that either party to a marriage, whether guilty or innocent, might apply to the Court for a divorce after seven year's separation.

Our records show that there are thousands of couples separated by Order of a Court or by private agreement, or who have just drifted apart, who are unable to obtain a divorce under the present law. This is often because the innocent party does not wish to take proceedings, this usually being based on either grounds of religion, feelings of vengeance or sheer indifference.

The result of separation without divorce is well known to every social worker. Extra-marital unions flourish and increase and their children are illegitimate. We suggest, for the consideration of Parliament, that the results of prolonged separation are always bad. This was the finding of the Royal Commission on divorce in 1912, and events since have confirmed it. Marcus Lipton's amendment would enable separated couples to end a mockery of a marriage and to form a new and legal union, which many of them long for.

EUSTACE CHESSER, W. B. CURRY, J. C. FLUGEL, GERALD GARDINER, K.C., J. F. HORRABIN, C. E. M. JOAD, JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY, A. M. F. PALMER, M.P., RUSSELL, HANNEN SWAFFER, LEONARD WOOLF, FENNER BROCKWAY

ZILLIACUS AT GATESHEAD

SIR,—This is an appeal for funds and voluntary workers to all who wish to help me get back to Parliament as the Labour (Independent) Member for the East Division of Gateshead, on a programme of general support as a democratic Socialist for the Labour Party in Parliament, but standing in particular for:

(*a*) Democracy in the Labour Party, that is the right of constituency parties to select their candidates for Parliament on the conditions laid down in the Party's Constitution, without having their choice dictated to them by the National Executive Committee's abuse of its right to refuse endorsement.

(*b*) Honesty in politics, that is the duty of a Member to keep faith with those who sent him to Parliament by speaking his mind on great issues according to his conscience and judgment in the light of his election pledges, even if that means disagreeing with his Party's leaders. It is a vital constitutional principle that a Member of Parliament owes his first duty to his constituents and that that duty includes using his own judgment about what his election pledges mean and sticking to those pledges.

(*c*) An all-in fight against the drift to bankruptcy and war and for a Socialist foreign policy that will give us houses, jobs and food, keep our boys at home instead of in the Forces, keep down prices and keep up wages, because it can win the peace. The Labour Party leaders propose to fight the next election without any foreign policy at all. The Tories want to fight it on a "get ready for war" policy. That way madness lies. All is lost if we go to war. Our standard of living will fall and unemployment will come back unless we end the cold war. Everything we have achieved at home will soon be undone if we cannot make peace.

It is mainly because I realise that the drift to war is wholly unnecessary and know how peace could be made by a foreign policy similar to that for which the Labour Party received a mandate in 1945 that I shall stand as a Labour (Independent) candidate in East Gateshead.

That is why I appeal for funds and workers for a campaign that will have not only national but international repercussions, that will be not only a campaign but a crusade.

Contributions and offers of help should be sent to Mrs. M. J. Reed, 309, Old Durham Road, Gateshead 9, or to me direct at the House of Commons. Cheques should be marked "Zilliacus Campaign Fund."

K. ZILLIACUS

House of Commons.

ARMY EDUCATION

SIR,—In his admirable article, C. E. M. Joad quotes the experience of young National Servicemen he has met. I can underline the point from my own military experience, being merely a little surprised at the casual way in which Joad disposes of it.

The fact that practically every conscript should lose the faculty of concentrated thought (assuming he once possessed it), albeit only for a matter of several months, is surely an indictment of our Armed Services which has escaped due public attention. Not all such impoverished ex-conscripts have the will, or the opportunity of the right sort of University training mentioned by Joad, to recover from this horrific pall of apathy. And what happens to them? Care must be taken lest the country should suffer permanently when my generation grows to manhood.

The only complete remedy, I am convinced, is abolition of conscription, for the spirit of "couldn't care less" is inherent in a peacetime conscript Army in which your training is completed after three months and all but a lucky few are then engaged in absolutely dead-end jobs. A conscript is a better soldier after six months' service than after eighteen.

But assuming that the Authorities find the system, corrupt as it is, indispensable, I can only suggest a great improvement, in the quantity and quality of Education Corps work. No provision at all is made for my class of student, awaiting entrance to a University, which Joad considers in his article. Surely it would be worth the while both of the student and the country to give him two afternoons off a week for private study. Amid the din and bustle of a barrack room or after a tiring day mechanically stamping or counting, the atmosphere for such concentrated work is barely suitable, and these afternoons would save the student's mind from dying a slow death by starvation.

R. A. BUCHANAN

35 Linden Avenue,
Sheffield, 8.

CAVE-PAINTING

SIR,—Miss Jacquetta Hawkes, reviewing *Lascaux: a commentary*, by Alan Brodrick, remarks, "a horse by a Stone Age painter has none of the photographic realism of a horse by Sir Alfred Munnings": but Sir Alfred's horses are not photographically realistic; if anything, they are stylised. (Degas might be said to be photographically realistic). The statement that "their styles differed as much as a wild horse differed from the pampered darling of the stables," is somewhat confused. Their styles differed in kind but the horses in degree. Anyhow the Stone Age painter saw no "pampered darlings" about or he would certainly have portrayed them with his usual gusto and vraisemblance, and Sir Alfred, had he lived some forty-thousand years ago would no doubt have used the same skill and tact with the wild horses as he lavishes on their descendants to-day. Miss Hawkes goes on to say "the earliest artists could command a stylisation, a subtle caricaturing of essentials, such as was achieved by the Chinese after long application to certain traditional subjects." On the contrary I suggest that all they had in common was their powers of observation. Finally Miss Hawkes assures us that some of the Lascaux animals, those that "combine fine engraving with painting, seem to me to come close to the poetic feeling of Paul Klee." Good for them! Nothing like being up-to-date.

AUGUSTUS JOHN

Fryern Court,
Fordingbridge, Hants.

DREAMS

SIR,—Dreams often seem to promise the final secret of all knowledge, but it's very seldom that we wake up to find the promise even partially fulfilled. Mr. F. Garfield Howe's dream seems at any rate to have started a metaphysical hare. Lest it should be pursued, I should like, even at the risk of cracking a nut with a sledge-hammer, to offer a few objections, any one of which I regard as fatal to his hypothesis.

"Precognition," he says, "... is no longer irrational if events are *always* one jump ahead of the immediate moment." This seems to mean, "if consciousness of an event always precedes the event." When I hear a clock strike one, my sensation of hearing occurs in the "immediate moment." Mr. Howe's suggestion is that the *event* described as the striking of the clock actually happens later than ("one jump ahead of") my sensation. Here, then, are some objections.

(1) My sensation is an event. Since my sensation occurs in the "immediate moment" (what is immediately present is what I am actually sensing) it follows from Mr. Howe's hypothesis that my sensation always occurs later than my sensation. Which is absurd.

(2) Even if we ignore the fact that sensations are events, it also follows from Mr. Howe's hypothesis not merely that common sense is wrong (it might well be) but that science is wrong; for scientists agree that *some* events, if not all, do always occur *earlier* than our consciousness of them.

(3) The hypothesis, if true, would not make an atom of difference to our problems. If events are always "one jump ahead of the immediate moment," then every act of perception is an act of precognition, and we should be no better off than before. We should still need a different word to describe the type of super-normal awareness investigated by Soal (misprinted "Soa") and Rhine, and there would still be exactly the same problem under a slightly different name, the problem of "pre-precognition" or knowledge of events *more* than one "jump" ahead.

I have already implied an answer to Mr. Howe's question, "What is the NOW?" As to precognition being "contrary to causality," many philosophers prefer to reverse this judgment and say that some traditional conceptions of causality are inconsistent with the facts of precognition and other psychic phenomena.

BERNARD MAYO

44 Calthorpe Road,
Birmingham, 15.

REPERTORY AND ARTS THEATRE

SIR,—Sir Basil Dean indulges in casuistry when he contests Mr. Worsley's statement that the Arts Council "presented" last Summer's Repertory Season at St. James's Theatre. The "idea" of bringing Repertory Companies to London is neither new nor original. The Repertory Season could not have taken place without the support of the Arts Council. That the financial guarantees of that body did not "cover the cost of administration" does not surprise me. If they had done so, it would.

The "idea," as Sir Basil calls it, is one thing; to carry it out is another. It appears strange that anyone should seek the financial backing of the Arts Council and then deny it responsibility. Public control over public expenditure, even when delegated to the Arts Council, must not be subjugated to private whims.

E.N.S.A. was another of Sir Basil's ideas paid for out of public funds but he did not "present" it and indeed disclaimed responsibility on that score. The over-taxed British citizen will, I fear, refuse to accept Sir Basil's novel doctrine that he who pays the piper should never call the tune.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

WITH this volume* Sir Osbert Sitwell's massive autobiographical edifice is completed, a work intended for the "gothic, complicated in surface and crowned with turrets and with pinnacles," and placed, as he rhetorically says, in the last sunset flare of a civilisation. The barking voice of the rag and bone man who frightened him when he was a child at Scarborough whines past the door. Soon, he will stop and knock. A gothic image, indeed, sour and northerly, but my impressions were of the warmer baroque rather than the gothic as I read this book. To see one art in the terms of another has been a foible of our inhuman period, and it is inevitable to think of this writer as an architect, just as at Renishaw and Montegufoni his father was. In that public art the eye for site and the pomp of due distance is decisive, and in Sir Osbert's grand artifice, the formal planning of the whole fantasy of memory is that of a conscious master. "It is dangerous for you," the voracious Sir George Sitwell used to say to his sons, "to lose touch with me for a single day"; and Sir Osbert has so determined it that we, too, shall not lose touch with himself in person for a single sentence. We shall be directed everywhere through his labyrinth, conducted to the calculated spot for all his best views; and there is going to be no delusion of wandering about on our own and peeping through the windows of locked rooms. In his stories, his novels, his works of travel, he has always been the impresario of his own words, a habit that makes on the whole for fantasy rather than intimacy or self-revelation. He is the most Dickensian of contemporary writers and Renishaw is a kind of gilded Bleak House seen from the inside.

"I don't know how it is," Sir George Sitwell, said to his son after one of his luncheon parties, 'but always it seems to me that I hear more laughter in the next room." We may be sure he did; but laughter like this is a good deal more awkward to report as an autobiography moves among the living. (And when satirists reform their kindness becomes thin or unctuous). It must be said that Sir Osbert's spiralling, circling, backwards-and-forwards method of writing has enabled him to preserve more dense human substance in this volume, which goes on to 1940, than one would have thought possible; indeed it is as rich as either of the others. Using as his pivot the crowds out on Armistice Night in 1918, he sallies, again and again in the opening pages, back to childhood or to the trenches, on to Scarborough and his political adventures, to his first trumpetings as a writer, collecting the picturesque and the horrifying, the scalding and the grotesque. If his opinions on the war of 1914, on the politicians, on the sufferings imposed at the Public Schools as if to train the *élite* for what they would have to go through, are again drummed into us, they now assume a classical John Bull-ish rumpus of their own. The Twenties were the years of wit and supercilious rage, of angry young men withering the old, and angry old men raging at the young, in a manner that can hardly have been seen in England since the screaming days of gout and disinheritance in the eighteenth century. Sir Osbert, who once or twice mentions that his family had had its own way about everything for 700 years, was in high condition for these exercises of the sensibility.

The dominant character is still Sir George although, towards the end, the Sancho Panza figure of Henry Moat, the butler, increases and, like a sardonic full moon, puts an appeasing drollery upon the family struggle. It is a remarkable triumph of feeling, that Sir George becomes more than an English eccentric, more than a marionette, but within his impossible egotism contains melancholy, sagacity and something fine. The aristocrat, like the artist, lives in a world of his own, within the complacency of his own innocence. Sir George was both aristocrat and artist, and not merely an artist in egotism—though here he did run to Shavian lengths; as Henry Moat said, "Sir George always liked to know where people *were*; and now he knows they're all in the cemetery"—terrifyingly he knew what he was doing. By Sir Osbert's art, the father becomes a character who generates incidents which take on a symbolism wider than his personal comedy. The following passage I quote at length because it is comical and also it looks like an allegory of our time; because again (for there is, so to say, a violent natural sympathy between father and son) it indirectly describes the emotion behind this book. The incident occurred at Montegufoni:

> My father had been singularly successful in retaining the air of forlorn grandeur, of pomp and riches in decline, which had impressed him as one of the beauties when he first saw this great building. Though he had always and consciously determined to preserve this atmosphere, it now also had become emphasised as the result of an incident that had taken place a year or two before. One afternoon, when I was in England, and when my father was at Montegufoni without my mother, a motor car drove up to the Castle door and a smartly dressed chauffeur got down from the box and explained to Henry that his master was the Fascist Minister of Finance, who happened to be motoring past, with some friends, and would like to see over the Castello.

The party were shown all the chief treasures of the place and Sir George, afterwards, was chagrined that they were more interested in financial values than in beauty:

> And this time he proved to be right: for early in the dark of next morning all the objects he had specially singled out for admiration were removed by a gang of robbers, equipped with the same motor. . . . After this, for many months, my father continued in a state of dejection; Henry said he had never known him so visibly a victim of melancholy. However, he had always possessed a firm faith in happy endings; and sure enough, he was recompensed finally in full measure, pressed down and overflowing. For when, some months later, joining him at the Castello, I remarked "You seem to have recovered your spirits, I'm glad to see," he explained, "I have had good news. The police have found the burglar's hoard, and returned me all my things." And then smiling to himself in a complacent way, he added, in a lower tone, "and, between ourselves, a good many as well that never belonged to me—including two quite good Primitives and a bag of gold coins."

Greater than the Great War, the pestering campaigns of Sir George go on from one windmill of farce to the next. His lack of consideration for others became almost lyrical and inspired. There is the episode of the patent egg; there is the election fight in which Sir George held that a few facts about life in the Middle Ages—for he had the collector's taste which his children have inherited—would mean more to the electors than talk of a brave new world; there is the triumphant moment when at an hotel he forced the locks of trunks not his own, and more or less told the hysterical ladies who owned them that it served them right; there is the remarkable episode in which, having been told by Sir Osbert that he was serving in the Army without pay (for the son was trying to keep his allowance) Sir George zestfully put detectives on to the Army Pay Office. Such anecdotes (and there are many of them) are not left to fend for themselves, as they are in a book like Augustus Hare's Victorian autobiography, a work I have often been reminded of as I read this book. They are part of the eddying and streaming of time and without this they would be laughable, but not felt, not moving. For time is Sir Osbert's subject, the absurd tragedy without meaning in which we are involved, in which we drift on drowning, with all the meanings we try to give it going down bizarre and waterlogged too; yet time cheated by the imagination.

How far Sir Osbert truly recovers the climate of the past, we are not able to say. When he writes of the sour and gruesome life of the trenches in France or of incidents that are macabre or shattering in the life of his family, one feels the intensity of his imagination. Henry Moat, for example, lives in his sayings ("My lady," he said arriving back at Renishaw rather drunk late at night, "pardon an erring lamb"), and in his wonderful letters; but there is a great deal to be said for the monumental Moat, the descendant of Whitby fishermen, posed in an "off maritime landscape" in the Venetian sun.

> The skin of his face, now generally copper-coloured from the effect of wine and sun, glowed a lusty red, and he swung his arms as he went with the jolly swagger of a fat man out for a day's enjoyment, the gaiety of the animal paragon, who, being contented in himself, can, though no longer young, still take a pleasure in scent, sound and the feel of the air. . . . If he had been alone, I judged, he would have now broken into one of the more familiar and unctuous hymn-tunes that he so loved, as a chant to creation. Isolated after this fashion, in a globe of crystal above the canal on one side, and on the other a flat land intersected by gleaming lines of water, there still emanated from him and remained about him something unmistakably nautical; nature seemed to supply an immutable background of threshing whales, an analogy of porpoises that none could fail to perceive. In the mind's eye seagulls bumped and squealed in arcs round his head, the herring, their scales twinkling with light, weighed down the nets.

Such solemn fancies are the complement of Sir Osbert's rotund humour and one plays off the other and gives depth to the picture.

The attractions and the disadvantages of the elaborate and ornate style, the long, consciously climbing sentence with its hair-pin bends and its three-star view at the top, can now be studied. Though Proust is the evident inspiration, there is no real resemblance between the writing of these volumes and *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. The long style, is, paradoxically, the style of drama and suspense—where are we going next?—but whereas in Proust the drama is in the act of memory, in Sir Osbert it lies in what he will impose next. The danger is the drift from the presumption of idiosyncrasy into the anonymous public manner; or into an overloading that will usually mean that the long sentence is not long enough. In a manner as marked as his one is surprised when, shall we say, the description of a society hostess or a political luncheon is done in the coach-and-six manner which one had earlier heard in the approach to an Italian sunset. Yet that is consistent with Sir Osbert's formal method which was made to control a rich memory, a rioting fancy and a fast wit, and to light only where he conducts. The critic can say no more. To the English comic tradition, Sir Osbert has added the tremendous.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *Laughter in the Next Room*. By Osbert Sitwell. Macmillan. 18s.

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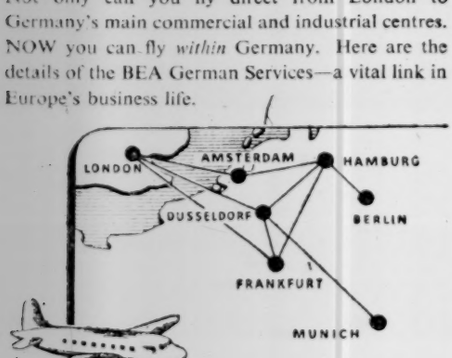

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Their Finest Hour. By WINSTON CHURCHILL. *Cassell.* 25s.

I read *Their Finest Hour* for the first time last spring when it was being serialised in the *New York Times*: and, as an Englishman travelling through the U.S.A., I found it superb. No propagandist could be half so effective at "selling" Britain to the U.S.A. as Winston Churchill. His life reflects and his mind comprehends precisely those aspects of our English way of life which Americans who were bored with *This Happy Breed* and cried with Mrs. Miniver, most easily appreciate. Churchill, indeed, is the personification of that Old England which American visitors discover with delight in the grey stone of Broadway, the formal lawns of a college garden and the ceremonial of the Horseguards Parade.

A second judgment, formed against the sober background of English realities, is rather less enthusiastic. The book is impressively composed and the style is as skilfully modulated as ever. But whereas in Volume I the story was that of a magnificent fight by a lonely backbencher against the forces of appeasement, in Volume II all the other characters—including the British people—are lay figures: the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence not only dominates but overwhelms the story. This is partly due to the fact that Churchill has decided to quote only his own minutes, memoranda and telegrams. We can read what he wrote to Roosevelt but very seldom what Roosevelt wrote to him. We can learn how he prodded the Chiefs of Staff and the members of the Cabinet; but very seldom do we hear anything of what they initiated on their own. He pays formal tribute to his collaborators but not the tribute of telling us what they did. Occasionally we catch a glimpse of the British people, but only when the Prime Minister is touched or entertained by some incident which catches his fancy. They are a subject for anecdote and affectionate admiration but never for serious study; in Churchill's picture the finest hour belongs not to the many but to the few.

I do not mean to suggest that there is any deliberate distortion or self-aggrandisement in this book. For a few weeks—possibly for a few months—Churchill (along with three or four hundred R.A.F. pilots) *was* Britain. He possessed powers greater than those of the American President—whom he handled as a friendly equal with superlative skill—and his moral leadership was infinitely greater than his powers. This was the time when, in default of material strength, spirit was all-important. By the time Churchill took over from Chamberlain, it was too late to stop the French collapse or develop a strategic plan. All that could be done was to show a British spirit of resistance. Churchill defeated Hitler's peace offensive and scared him out of risking a summer invasion by expressing what all of us felt; and he rallied a defeatist America in the same way. Any book which narrated the events of May to September, 1940, must be centred round one man.

Yet *Their Finest Hour* lacks something in recalling the mood of these weeks. Their obvious epic qualities are painted so flamboyantly that part of the victory is omitted. In describing Dunkirk, smaller men, with far less literary skill, have got much nearer the truth, because they recorded not only the heroism, but the fear and indiscipline, and told us how they were overcome. In portraying the blitz, those who were able to see and describe the scared spill-out of refugees from the East End, the smell of the tubes, the sickening horror of an "incident," have captured a quality which *Their Finest Hour* lacks. Millions of people, when they think back to 1940, remember not one voice but two. First Churchill, the magnificent descendant of Marlborough who spoke for the nation, and secondly a Yorkshireman called J. B. Priestley, who talked to the people. It is significant that, though he mentions many quite insignificant persons, Churchill makes no reference to Priestley. The Sunday postscripts after the 9 o'clock news do not fit into his picture of our finest hour any better than the detail of Dunkirk and the blitz.

1940 was not merely the year when we fought alone. It was also the time when decisions were taken which determined both the strategy of the war and the conditions of the peace. Hitler's failure to invade was a complete justification of Churchill's concept of sea power and the most valuable part of this book is the analysis of the precise reasons for that failure. But sea power by itself could never become an offensive weapon; and after 1940 it would be increasingly dominated by air power. How, then, could Germany be defeated? Already in the autumn the momentous decision was taken to use indiscriminate bombing as a major offensive weapon. The chain of events is curious. German bombing, in August, was still strictly tactical. But owing to a demand for reprisals, the R.A.F. went for Berlin, not for any strategic purpose—the raid was made in negligible strength—but purely to sustain home morale. In fury Hitler ordered retaliation on London just at the moment when the Fighter Defences of Kent and Surrey would have broken down if the attack on them had been sustained even for a few days. In fact the Berlin raid, though this was certainly not its purpose, saved us from invasion. And in due course the German raids on London led Churchill to divert a major portion of our industrial strength from invasion preparations to the bomber offensive. Could we have launched a second front in 1943, if we had used those resources for landing barges instead of Lancasters? No one will ever answer the question definitively. But it is clear from this book that both the German and the British decision to use indiscriminate bombing were based more on passion than on cool strategic reason.

The book concludes with accounts of the German negotiations with Spain, the Italian invasion of Greece and Wavell's brilliant desert victory. Here, too, we see the seeds sown which will later grow into most unpredictable weeds. Churchill reveals that his main reason for going to the aid of Greece, and so sacrificing the capture of Tripoli, was the hope of winning Turkey as an active ally. It is interesting to speculate who lost more, Hitler by his efforts to bribe Franco into the war or Churchill by his sacrifices in North Africa for the sake of a Turkish belligerency which was never achieved even when our victory was certain. In both cases the wily neutral took his prepayment and stayed out.

Their Finest Hour is a superb piece of narrative. But I fear that, as these Memoirs proceed, apologetics will increasingly extrude objectivity. A self-centredness, largely justifiable in telling the story of the summer of 1940, may easily become intolerable if it is applied to the period when the sheer spirit of defiance proved an inadequate substitute for statesmanship.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

THE ORCHESTRA

Sixteen Symphonies. By BERNARD SHORE. *Longmans.* 17s. 6d.

The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz. By ADAM CARSE. *Heffer.* 30s.

Something about the viola—its discreet, veiled tone-quality, perhaps, or the subtle contrapuntal strands which often come its way—seems to set violists in an intellectual category of their own among musicians. There is Lionel Tertis, with his remarkable blend of idealism and practical good sense; there is Thomas Russell, historian of the London Philharmonic, who pulled that orchestra through a war-time crisis and remained to direct its post-war activities; and there is Bernard Shore, who was once principal violist of the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra. Shortly before the war Mr. Shore published a book called *The Orchestra Speaks* (a series of character sketches of famous conductors, as seen by the orchestra), which had an immense and well-deserved

success: the author was revealed as something of a Boswell, if we can imagine Boswell in pursuit of several Dr. Johnsons; in particular, he possessed an admirable memory, which enabled him again and again to recall the very turns of phrase (often in quaintly broken English) with which the long hours of rehearsal had been illuminated.

It was to be expected that we should hear again from this fluent and lively writer; and his second book will give as much pleasure as his first. It is precisely what one is always being asked to recommend: an introduction to the masterpieces of symphonic literature which is detailed and accurate without being difficult. The author assumes that his readers will be helped rather than discouraged by a plentiful use of thematic quotations; but he is more readily intelligible than Tovey. In direct human approach, combined with sound musicianship, he reminds me often of Sir George Grove (whose still invaluable *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies* is now in print again, I am glad to observe). But what gives Mr. Shore's book its particular flavour is, once more, his practical orchestral experience. He has chosen one symphony by each of sixteen composers, from Haydn to Walton, and prefaced each account by a brief sketch of the composer's achievement as symphonist and orchestrator. In the resulting 32 chapters, almost every page is enlivened by anecdote and comment from the player's point of view. Thus, of Schumann's Fourth Symphony: "How the violas wish they were not always doubled by bassoons when anything important turns up!" Or, of the charming A minor tune, scored for oboe and solo cello, which begins the Romance in the same work:

> It is extraordinarily difficult for a solo stringed instrument to play either in unison or in octaves with a wind instrument. They often do not sit near each other, and intonation thus becomes a matter of anxiety, while the concentration necessary to match the other instrument's every note militates against spontaneity.

In the analyses we are brought extraordinarily close to the actual stuff of the music; we hear the themes passed to and fro over our shoulders. The result is stimulating: it is difficult to read Mr. Shore's account of the great C major Symphony of Schubert without longing to hear it again instantly. After his description of the Andante, the Scherzo is tackled with this typically professional comment:

> With no time even to rub our eyes we are hurtled into violent movement and bustle. After a mediocre performance of the slow movement, in the hands of a dull and tedious conductor, the strings are wont to release their pent-up annoyance in these first four bars. Many are the instruments that have suffered and bow-hairs broken on this account.

We overhear the injunctions and cajolings of the great conductors who have made each composer or symphony especially their own. We listen to Toscanini on Beethoven, to Harty on Berlioz, to Boult on Elgar; we can compare the handling of Schubert by Walter and Boult, or of Tchaikovsky by Wood and Koussevitzky. And in spite of all this, the emphasis remains always on the music itself, not on the personality of the interpreter. The author acknowledges his debt to his friend Mr. Richard Capell, and he must be allowed to have modelled himself almost too closely on Mr. Capell's graceful, idiosyncratic style. Too frequent, the use of the exclamation mark! Positively inveterate, the inverted structure of the sentences! But this is my only complaint—and a small one.

Mr. Adam Carse's handsomely produced and illustrated volume is a learned and exhaustive treatise, a sequel to his *Orchestra in the 18th Century*. I don't mean to imply that it is not also highly interesting; but it is as a work of reference that it will be most valuable. What could be more useful to the student than the 20 pages which set out in tabular form (according to carefully quoted authorities) the constitution and strength of numerous European orchestral establishments during the first half of the nineteenth century? Just the sort of thing for which one searches in vain through half a dozen encyclopædias. Mr. Carse's 500 pages are packed with widely gathered material relating to every detail of his subject; and the subject itself is of the first importance, for this was the period when the orchestra ceased to be a mere appendage of the opera-house, increased formidably in dimensions, and became for the first time dependent upon a conductor who did nothing else during the performance except conduct. Problems of orchestral balance arose almost for the first time in these years, when the increased weight of brass tone began to necessitate a great increase in the number of strings. Mr. Carse goes so far as to say that:

> The problem of brass versus string-tone in an orchestra has never been satisfactorily settled, and it is doubtful whether it ever can be. The nature of brass-tone at its full power is such that its ability to penetrate through or crush virtually any amount of string-tone is always assured.

Yes; but may not that remark be biased by English experience? The effect, so familiar at Munich or Bayreuth, of a rich, glowing core of brass tone cushioned within, but never overwhelming, the surrounding strings (my metaphor may be mixed, but it conveys what I mean)—that particular effect is seldom achieved in England; partly, no doubt, because of the different construction of our brass instruments; still more, because our conductors rarely demand it. A more serious trouble is that the increase in string volume often blurs such solo woodwind passages as occur throughout the scores of Mozart, where flute and oboe should sing out, again and again, like a soloist at the opera.

When we complain about the adulation now lavished on conductors, it is worth while to remember how many nuisances were removed by their advent, among them the continual tapping of the leader's bow on the desk or the foot-stamping, with which he sought to maintain the beat: complaints about these noisy interruptions recur frequently in Mr. Carse's narrative. In an interesting chapter devoted to the leading conductors of the period we are reminded that Beethoven himself never "conducted" in the modern sense of the word. A charming piety leads the author to rescue from oblivion the rank and file of the old orchestral players by naming them wherever possible. Only the irreverent will complain that this procedure gives to some pages a faint look of Beachcomber's famous compilation, the *List of Huntingdonshire Cabmen*.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

FINIS CORONAT

An Autobiography and Other Essays. By G. M. TREVELYAN. *Longmans.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

George Macaulay Trevelyan's life has been of a piece; the end has crowned the work. He seems never to have put a foot wrong. The son of a Whig historian and the grand-nephew of Macaulay, he was training himself as a writer of history at an age when most boys of his generation were still weighing the advantages of engine-driving. Sir George Otto Trevelyan was not only a historian; he was also a rich man and a Liberal politican who became Chief Secretary for Ireland after Lord Frederick Cavendish had been murdered in Phoenix Park. His son George had no more doubt that his politics were to be Liberal than that his profession was to be history. In his admirable prose he describes his early life, spent largely at great country houses; he tells us that he was a misfit at Harrow, where he was the sole avowed Liberal and the only boy to refuse to be confirmed. Like Macaulay he was no good at mathematics; in the end he got his own way and was allowed to specialise in history. At Cambridge further worlds opened up. He became an Apostle and a friend of some of the finest minds of his generation. He had a natural modesty which enabled the Great to enjoy his company even

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when he was young. He travelled, and all his opinions were confirmed; his passionate love of England, beautiful in aspect and Liberal in politics, grew with his knowledge of less happy lands. He was able to throw off the nuisance of games and develop his peculiar athletic prowess. One of his early essays was an admirable dissertation on walking, rather in the manner of Stevenson; in particular he discusses the eighty-mile walk from Oxford to Cambridge which he and a few others had done within 24 hours. He was also founder of the sport which has personally given me most pleasure in life—that of racing up British mountains and running full speed down them.

He formed a very justifiable dislike of Professor Seeley, who pretended that history should be a science and rested his own fame and fortune on sheer propaganda. He decided that the scientific school were a pest and that Macaulay had been right in writing history for ordinary people to enjoy. He set out to reintroduce literary history. I recall that when I went up to Cambridge in 1919, the first essay we were given to write was on the Use of History, and we were told to read Trevelyan's *Clio; a Muse*, an essay in which Seeley is castigated and Bury's scientific arguments answered in a prose style which can be appreciated even by undergraduates.

I have said that Trevelyan never put a foot wrong. He did not, for intance, fall into the easy trap of settling down for life as a Fellow, spending most of his time in teaching, producing a few books and stepping automatically into the Regius Professorship. On the contrary, having no reason to teach for a living, he left Cambridge and tramped the battlefields of Europe, re-imagining ancient wars; he became inspired with the story of Garibaldi, in which his father was once an active participant, and wrote the series of books which first made him famous as a historian. Personally, I most enjoy his account of 17th century thought and the controversies of *Stuart England*, but I accept his verdict that his Garibaldi has a quality of excitement and inspiration which is otherwise not present in his work. Since then his stature as a historian has steadily grown, but it is only in recent years, when nobody could accuse him of the superficiality that is the basis of so much popular history, that he began to rank as a best-seller. When he sold half-a-million copies of his *Social History* he could fairly claim to have satisfied ambition. He had revived popular interest in history and he had also received the highest academic distinction. He has been recalled to his own university as Regius Professor. Then he became Master of Trinity and, finally, received the Order of Merit.

Can one review so perfectly rounded a life without some touch of envy? Where there is no ground for criticism, impeccability becomes a cause for complaint. Where we cannot find fault in character we suggest priggishness. But Trevelyan is certainly not a prig. Nor is he at all smug. Subjected to fewer jolts than most men, he was not, it is true, driven to search his soul or overcome the conflicts that afflict so many. But it would again be quite unfair to suggest superficiality in his case. His love and knowledge of poetry, particularly that of George Meredith, gave him a religion of his own which contemporaries at Cambridge would tell you had an important influence on his generation.

We are therefore left with only one question—the quality and value of his historical work. Its influence in making people read and enjoy history is undoubted. He says in his lectures on *History and the Reader*, *Bias in History* and *Stray Thoughts on History*, which in this book follow the Autobiography, that to him "the chief value of history, but not its only value, is poetic." His chief concern has been to impart to others that intense joy which he himself feels in contemplating the past and relating it to the present. History to him is splendour, pageantry and romance. He rightly repudiates the pretence that it can be written without bias. He knows that we can demand of the historian that he does not suppress facts or argue a thesis based on falsification or ignorance, but that he will not be worth our attention unless he has prejudices and acknowledges them.

His own prejudices are English and Liberal; the history he writes is, as he says, "traditional." He does not believe in philosophies of history. He cannot accept the mystic generalisation of Toynbee; like Voltaire, he holds that much has happened by chance. If he had been twenty years younger, he would have been compelled seriously to consider the historical generalisations of Marx. He makes, in short, no pretensions to be a philosopher or to find generalisations that cover the whole of human conduct and human history. To me he seems too easily satisfied with a great tradition. He is, however, one of the happiest and most successful of men because, knowing early what he could do and wishing to do it, he has accepted the limitations of his own mind, and, within these limits, achieved exactly that which he set out to do. KINGSLEY MARTIN

PARTIGIANI

Highway Forty. By BASIL DAVIDSON. *Frederick Muller*. 9*s*. 6*d*.

When the subject is guerrilla warfare, there are two ways of covering the canvas. If you happen to be that sort of writer, you can compose your picture—stripped of everything but the artistically essential, arranged and poignant—as Hemingway did in El Sordo's last stand on the hilltop where death had to be taken *como si fuera aspirina*. Or you can present, in the guise of fiction if you so choose, a documentary in which fidelity is apt to be at odds with art. In his story of the hidden battlefield of the Apennines, in which thousands of Italian partisans during the winter of 1944–45 were compressed into the high peaks while the Allied and German front lines clinched in deadlock

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away to the South, Mr. Davidson has adopted the second course; and, regarded strictly as a novel, his book suffers from his choice. It has no "inevitable shape"; the details often fail to "compose" convincingly.

Yet to say this is a real tribute to the author's honesty in his documentarist role. Here, undoctored and moving in its sincerity, is an account of men who fought without the energising dynamic of a great, organised army, who trod—sometimes from hatred of tyranny, sometimes from idealism, but always unromantically—the "razor's edge between inertia and necessity, painful and inglorious." Some, like the ex-pilot, became disillusioned or shrank from a cause which might become a fight "for Communism"; others, such as Dragutin, died heroically, shockingly, "in the worst of taste," with "Freedom for the People!" on their lips—doctrinaires mocked by the unchanging anarchy of the peasants on whose lives their battles impinged. And, in the end, the dead and survivors alike were frustrated: the ardours and endurances were largely fruitless. When the central incident—the successful withdrawal of the partisans' hospital across Highway Forty in face of the German *rastrellamento*—is completed, Mr. Davidson's book ends; but this was not the end of the partisan movement in Italy, and the finish was, from their standpoint, a defeat.

The reader, but not the actors in the story, knows that the kind of "liberation" for which most of these men fought was widely different from the Allied High Command's conception of orderly victory; that the propaganda appeals which had been used to stimulate their uprising would be cynically forgotten; and that in the winter of 1944–45 Alexander was already preparing to carry out Churchill's directive to abort revolution. No doubt Italy had to be saved for democracy and de Gasperi: tourists might not be so well fed in the Rome of 1949 if the partisans had had their way. Perhaps some of their ideas were laughable. Yet, in 1945, even when they conned maps—"because in war you have maps"—of hills which they knew like the backs of their hands, they were not ridiculous:

> The risk of death remained, and it was difficult to laugh at that. A dozen dirty types with stolen rifles; but at least they were willing to die.

Had they foreseen the future, they might have been less willing. Or perhaps they would still have fought, and died, much like Dragutin, with a rather greater sense of reluctance. They were destined to be the victims of history; and their ignorance of their destiny invests the whole of this fine and honest book with the bitterness of ironic tragedy. AYLMER VALLANCE

A REVOLUTION IN THINKING

Natural Philosophy of Cause and Chance. By MAX BORN. *Oxford University Press.* 17*s.* 6*d.*

From Euclid to Eddington. By SIR EDMUND WHITTAKER. *Cambridge University Press.* 15*s.*

Here, first, are the Waynflete Lectures given at Oxford last year; their author is one of the grand masters of physics to-day, who first became famous in the great German school of the Twenties. Professor Born begins by recalling his surprise when he found himself at Oxford "facing a large audience in which physicists and mathematicians were presumably a minority." He had to simplify the written draft of his lectures as he went along, and he tells us that he has tried to keep something of this simplicity in print, in the main by putting his mathematics into an appendix which is almost as long as his text. I cannot pretend that he has succeeded. With the best will in the world, on Professor Born's part and the reader's, this remains a book for physicists and mathematicians.

This is a pity, because what Professor Born has to say is a matter of lively interest to everyone who takes pleasure in thinking. I say "in thinking" rather than "in science," for this reason: that what is being worked out here and elsewhere in physical theory to-day is more, and is more important, than a revolution in science—it is a revolution in thinking. It overturns the traditional order in which we think that things happen, and puts in its place a new order. Professor Born has put the old order and the new bluntly in his title, as Cause and Chance.

The history of this change is, I hope, becoming widely known, but I will pause to underline it. Roughly since 1687, when Newton published the *Principia*, it had been accepted that the future of every smallest piece of matter is determined by its present and that of its fellows, through endless time. It had been accepted that time and space are in every sense uniform; and that so, in a narrower sense, are such physical quantities as energy and radiation. These beliefs had given trouble before 1900; yet no one then would have dreamt that they might be at fault in anything but detail. But about that time a change began; radioactivity and the electron were discovered; Planck and then Einstein made new starts in theory. The change became a landslide, which overwhelmed in turn energy, time, matter, space and radiation. In 1927 it reached and buried even the strict determination of the future from the present. In its place we have a principle of only limited certainty which is this: that in watching the behaviour of single electrons, the observer is handicapped by an essential ignorance or bias; and it is only statistically, for whole masses, that he can describe their behaviour with certainty. His knowledge is of the kind which Kant described long ago, when he said that we cannot foresee this marriage or that, but we can forecast the marriage rate.

For scientists and laymen alike, this loss of a strict determinism has overshadowed all other changes in physical theory. Time and space, energy and radiation and even matter, as they appear in physics, have after all a remote and,

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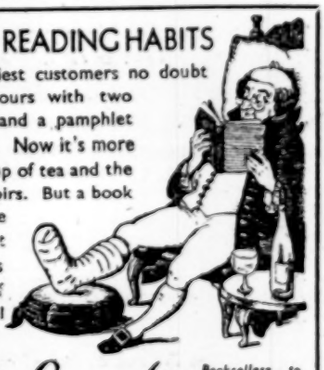

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to tell the truth, rather an unreal air. But cause and effect is a principle which we believe to govern what happens to us daily, and by which we judge our conduct to be rational. As a matter of habit at least, it is little comfort to the layman to be offered in its place the unfamiliar notions of statistical regularity. And it is fair to add that there are also very distinguished scientists who continue to hope that a new unifying theory may yet be found which will bring back causality. Professor Born quotes two personal letters in which Einstein himself says firmly that he will never give up the search for a causal theory to end what he calls the reign of *der würfelnde Gott*, the God at dice.

In this, however, Einstein is in a minority; and Professor Born is with the majority of scientists in believing that rigid determinism is gone from physics once for all. Indeed, Professor Born was a leader in grasping this, and in using instead the statistical principle of, as it were, limited but cumulative certainty. In this book he sketches the physical bases and the development of these ideas tersely and lucidly, in little more than a hundred pages; and I can only repeat my regret, that he has not been able to rid them of a forbidding weight of symbols. At the same time he adds some interesting new ideas. The most important of these is a distinction between strict physical determinism and the familiar flow of cause and effect. Professor Born holds that there is a wide sense in which cause gives rise to effect, which is not challenged; and this is the sense of common usage. It is not the sense of deterministic physics, because there the sequence of events is ruled by equations like those of Newton which have this oddity, that they can be turned backward in time as well as forward. Surely, says Professor Born, this is more than we should or do mean by causality; and is a larger assertion, not merely that cause gives rise to effect, but that the effect equally determines the cause. The determinism of the equations may turn time forward or backward; but in fact, cause and effect go only one way.

How, then, does physics fix the direction of time? At bottom, by introducing statistical in place of exact calculations, for any mass of matter; and it did this long before uncertainty hit the headlines in 1927. What Professor Born has to say here is less new, but it has not until now been so plainly tied to a distinction between the determinism of physics and the flow of cause and effect. I come back to my point, that such distinctions are of far more than scientific interest. They echo the distrust which we have all felt when we have seen the comfortable notion of cause and effect grow alarmingly to lock the world into a tight groove of predestination. Professor Born really puts this into another paradox: that effect must follow cause in time, but time is given its direction only by our uncertainty of both. And a paradox is a very lively way to be thinking.

The second book contains the Tarner Lectures given by Sir Edmund Whittaker at Cambridge. Where it covers the same ground as the first, it does so less intensively; for the treatment is descriptive and historical rather than speculative; and, as a result, there are places where it sinks almost to a list of theories. But the main part of the book is wider: it unfolds the growth of our ideas of space, time and movement from Greek times to Relativity. This is done with a fascinating sweep and clarity, and is a model of how to write easily and exactly for intelligent readers. At the same time, Professor Whittaker has some original things to say about the way in which general qualitative principles in physics may be made the bases for the logical deduction of quantitative results. Professor Whittaker's style has long been an example to mathematicians; and there are sections in this book which might serve equally as examples to non-scientists, who believe that what they write will bear thinking about.

J. BRONOWSKI

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NEW NOVELS

Icedrome. By FRANK TILSLEY. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 10s. 6d.
Repent in Haste. By JOHN P. MARQUAND. *Hale.* 6s.
When Ape is King. By OSWALD WYND. *Home & Van Thal.* 9s. 6d.
You Can't See Round Corners. By JON CLEARY. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 8s. 6d.

Every reviewer quickly learns to recognise the novel which seeks the epithet "distinguished": thin, wet, amateurish and intense, it appears with grim frequency, and although the title and author change one soon comes to feel that one is reading some vast amorphous serial, plodding through a featureless undergrowth of fiction. Because Mr. Tilsley's books are the complete antithesis of the "distinguished," one may be inclined to think even better of them than they deserve. Yet as a popular novelist he is impressively equipped. He is admirably professional. He can create characters which, although they lack depth, have enormous vitality. His plots are both ingenious and natural. His incident arises naturally out of his plot, and, although it is profuse, it is always telling. His fluent readability implies a great deal of hard work. As to his qualifications for popularity, he is, although again without any large profundity of insight, seriously concerned about matters which worry a lot of people. He stands for honest conduct in business and marriage. He voices, in a personal and feeling way, sentiments which are more often found on official lips. His values are "old-fashioned," anti-sophisticated. Yet in a way he belongs to the future. He has no interest in social distinctions; some people in his books have more money than others, but all the children call their mothers "Mum." They are part of that socially classless society which George Orwell once described as coming into existence "in labour-saving flats or Council houses, along the concrete roads and in the naked democracy of the swimming pools."

In choosing as the scene of his new book a skating-rink in a London suburb, Mr. Tilsley has shown his usual judgment. It provides him at once with the big canvas he enjoys; diverse groups of characters, the instructors, the children, their mothers, are brought naturally together by a common interest. Jean Mason, daughter of a young mother who is separated from her husband and very hard-up, has the makings of a big-money professional; she is coached, free, by Joyce Westerham, who is already within sight of this ambition, and is having an affair with a famous Continental skater. Jean's mother, Dora, is forced, unwillingly by the needs of Jean's future, into a relationship with her loud-mouthed, black-market landlord. And so on. It is a real plot, in the old-fashioned tradition, and in the end the old-fashioned virtues come out on top. It is all nicely tied up by what is going on on the ice, and Mr. Tilsley, characteristically, handles the technicalities of a highly technical sport with unostentatious mastery; he writes convincingly about the discipline of school figures and the electrifying excitement of free skating, and if he tells us on page 29 that Jean can do three back loop jumps *in succession*, and on page 220 that she still can't land on a clean back edge from an axle, one recalls that, after all, skating does provide these mysteriously inconsistent difficulties.

Mr. Marquand's book provides an interesting contrast to Mr. Tilsley's. I have indicated why I think that the English best-seller audience will find what it likes in *Icedrome*. What does the American best-seller audience like? The English book is leisurely, sympathetic, and despite a certain amount of crime and one act of violence, gentle in its general tone; the American one is short, abrupt, acrid. Caliban's face as seen in Mr. Marquand's mirror is a pretty unflattering sight. Young Americans fight and die bravely: but what are they fighting and dying for? It seems to puzzle Mr. Marquand, and it is likely to puzzle his readers. "Boysie" Boyden, a young Naval flyer, presented to us with some care for establishing his typicality, is married to a "cute little trick" who is sleeping with the ex-fiancé from whom Boysie had grabbed her; by the time Boysie hears about it he is himself interested in the cutest little kid. These empty and conformist lives, these routine matings and adulteries of the college group, are presented with perhaps a trace of irony and sadness, and with some sympathy (after all, the "kids" keep getting themselves killed—presumably for *something*) but the main impression left by the book is that Mr. Marquand doesn't know what it's all about and has been successful mainly in passing this on.

We are all familiar with the novel dealing with the problem of collaboration with the enemy. Collaborate, and save something from the wreckage, or resist, perhaps only to make things worse. It was a real problem for many decent people, but as regards Europe it is worked-out and dead. In the Far East different factors were involved; we know less about them, and the problem has a continuing significance. In *When Ape is King* Mr. Wynd, in writing about Elizabeth Rennforth, the Eurasian war-widow of an Englishman, and Captain Hagamoto, a Japanese with an American mother, is touching upon a much wider matter than "collaboration"—the relationship of Europeans and Orientals. Elizabeth, a nurse in a hospital in Singapore, is sufficiently acceptable to the Japanese to be made matron when the rest of the European staff go to Changi. To keep the hospital going at all she has to co-operate, to seek the help of Hagamoto. Hagamoto is a loyal Japanese officer, but he *is* half-American, and Mr. Wynd, who has the advantage of a knowledge of the Japanese gained before being their prisoner, has made an interesting and sympathetic study of a kind of personality which to most of us is quite unknown. But he does not let his sympathy run away with him; there are some passages in which he takes a swing and gets in well below the belt; apart from providing one exceedingly funny scene this approach has the effect of avoiding the sentimentality and falseness which spoil so many studies of ex-enemies.

You Can't See Round Corners is a pattern title for a pattern novel, the modern morality play in which the central character is the archetypal wide boy, and the sin is pride. "Two years ago," in the summing-up of Mr. Jerome Weidman's classic text, "I was just another poor slob from the Bronx, and tonight I'm going to sleep with an actress." This is the success which, beyond the fifth ace and the doped horse, the last jackpot and the ruined steamers, shines like the hope of heaven. But you can't be smart all the time, you can't buck the game every deal, you can't see round corners. It is a satisfying pattern, and Mr. Cleary has done a good job in it. Frankie McCoy is the hero; a small-time bookie in Sydney at the age of 21, he deserts from the Army with all the brilliant confidence of his type. His girl, Margie, who plays the part of his good angel, refuses to see him until he gives himself up. The wrong horses win. Frankie moves from mere wideness to criminality, and meets his inevitable fate. The fact that the book is set in Australia, which for this purpose is a kind of no-man's land between England and America, somehow adds to the abstract, morality-play atmosphere, but it would after all be affected to make too much of this and it can be recommended anyway as a well-paced near-thriller.

J. D. SCOTT

THE CONSCIENCE OF A PATRIOT

Strange Defeat. By MARC BLOCH. Translated by GERARD HOPKINS. *Oxford University Press.* 10s. 6d.

On the 18th of June, 1940, an advance German column passed down the main boulevard of Rennes. An elderly French staff officer, stranded in that town, decided that it was time for him to go. His method of avoiding capture had an unobtrusive ease about it. Borrowing a civilian jacket and tie from the landlord of the house where he was billeted (his dark serge trousers were not conspicuously military), he booked a room, under his own name, at a leading local hotel. He then hung around in Rennes for a fortnight, waiting for the trains to start up again. He then took a train home. The prudent dash and astute simplicity that had served Marc Bloch so well in this little episode were equally useful to him when, in 1942, he began to work for the Resistance. But in 1944 the Germans got him. His death, like his life, was exemplary and traditional: nobody could have been a better representative of all that is noblest in the French tradition than this free-thinking Jew. Bloch and others were facing a firing squad. "A boy of sixteen was standing next to him, trembling. 'Will it hurt?' Bloch took him affectionately by the arm, and merely said, 'No, my boy: it won't hurt at all.' He was the first to fall, crying, '*Vive la France!*'"

Bloch had served his country gallantly in two wars. In the intervals of peace, he had built himself up a reputation as an expert on medieval history and become a noted teacher at the Sorbonne. When he sat down, therefore, in 1940 to write this little book—a criticism of certain weaknesses in the French social and military traditions that had contributed to defeat—he was well equipped for his task, both as a man and a scholar. He criticised the weaknesses of the French tradition from the point of view of one who wholeheartedly accepted its strengths. Liberal and tolerant, he was without religious beliefs; though his patriotism was almost a religion. His ancestors had fought for France in 1789 and 1870 and he thought of himself as a Jew only when he met an anti-Semite. He had never been a Communist. He had an enormous respect for Marx as a pioneer sociologist but did not see why his works should be treated as Holy Writ in 1940. He had never been a pacifist either; the effect of pacifism as a mass movement seemed to him to be the encouragement of potential aggressors. He was on the whole a man of the Left, but disgusted by the inconsistencies of French politics on both sides. And as his own life had been passed wholly in public service of one sort or another, he wrote as one who had always been in some degree above the social struggle. Thus he had a sharp eye for the obvious rifts in the surface of French life; but he was less acute about the deep inner tensions, since he had never felt these within himself. And he failed to realise that, while patriotism can be enough for some citizens, it can never be enough for the State. It was certainly not patriotism and liberalism of Bloch's own sort that had brought down France in 1940; but neither would they have been enough, of themselves, to give France moral unity.

Bloch's criticism of French weaknesses in 1940 may seem, therefore, not to go deep enough. Acute and detailed over a wide field, it has one general target: the literary pedantry of the French mind. The French have a fondness for rigid notional schemes, and a corresponding distaste for shifting and obscure realities. French newspapers are very well written, but the last thing one goes to them for is news. French schoolboys learn to express themselves with an elegance that most English adults must envy; they are not taught to use their eyes or their hands. The French would, on the whole, rather ignore awkward facts than disturb the symmetry of preconceived formulas. "There are *no* general ideas!" a fellow officer of Bloch's once

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Company Meeting

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INCREASED PROFITS

The 23rd annual general meeting of Marks and Spencer Ltd. was held on Thursday, June 23rd, in London. Sir Simon Marks, D.Sc. (the chairman) presiding.

In the course of his speech, the chairman said: The profit, before providing for taxation, amounts to £4,193,000, compared with £3,169,000 last year. Provision for taxation, amounting to £2,350,000 is required, leaving £1,843,000, against £1,319,000.

The rise in profits is due to a substantial increase in turnover. Our policy has always been to bring to the public the goods they need at prices which fit their purse. Wherever and whenever we can, by more efficient methods, create improvements in our goods or lower prices, our customers receive the direct benefits which they appreciate.

Although production in most of our departments expanded, we felt the shortages most acutely in our supplies of woven materials, which are made up into garments of all kinds. It was in an effort to increase these supplies that we deemed it necessary to enter into closer relationship with some of our friends in the textile industry. We consequently acquired a financial participation in their businesses.

We are gratified with the development of our cafeterias and our food business generally. I believe our success in this field is due to our concern with the setting and the maintenance of high standards of quality for all foodstuffs we handle, as well as our insistence on their freshness and palatability. We attach the greatest importance to hygiene and cleanliness in the handling of food.

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The report was adopted and an issue of bonus shares approved.

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exclaimed, in exasperation against this tendency.

What Bloch is opposing, in fact, is the Cartesian dogma (firmly embedded in the tradition of French thought) that simple and clear ideas are necessarily true. Outside the fields of mathematics and formal logic, simple and clear ideas are, in fact, merely crystallisations of existing sentiments. And these sentiments are, as like as not, irrational. Thus the almost Chinese respect of the French for age and due gradations gave them, as Bloch points out, a quite unwarranted confidence in senile and doddering generals; their fondness for the slow and pleasant rhythms of country life made it difficult for them to compete in a highly industrialised world; their feeling for ancient institutions, like the French Academy, caused them to ignore the fact that these were often citadels of a conservatism entirely hostile to Republican principles. No doubt this rigidity of French social sentiment is in some degree a necessary counterbalance to French political adventurousness; as the fluidity of our own social sentiments is a necessary counterbalance to our conservatism about forms of government. Yet we, in our vague and sloppy way—and allowing that geography gives us a breathing space, and that we seem to start nearly all our wars on the wrong foot—seem to be a much more adaptable people. It is better to start a war, for instance, with no notion at all of what may happen than with a clear notion which is also a wrong one. "The worst cases of mental paralysis," says Bloch, speaking of the effect of the German advance in 1940 on his fellow officers, "were the result of that mood of outraged amazement which laid hold of men who were faced by a *rhythm of events entirely different from what they had been led to expect*."

How far, since 1940, have the French learned any of these lessons which were so clear to Bloch within a few weeks of defeat? I know little about current French politics. But Sartre's view of life, for instance, seems to me an example of that kind of purely verbal thinking that Bloch was deploring; a great web of words woven round the truism that we must often make uncomfortable decisions and always take the consequences of them. And Sartre's psychology, with its attempt to explain human behaviour wholly in terms of free conscious choices and its refusal to accept the reality of unconscious drives, seems to me one more instance of a French tendency to prefer notions to facts. Yet all this, after all, is only the seamy side of the French passion for the life of the mind. The Americans, at least as soldiers, have all the qualities of loose, easy, and flexible adaptation to new situations that Bloch wanted the French to acquire. Their armies are just what he might have wished the French armies to be. Yet does the United States represent, compared with France, a higher civilisation? And can we have a civilisation of the French sort, and at the same time the pragmatic temper of mind and the mechanical kind of organisation that make for success in modern war and politics? And if we can only have one or the other of these, which should we choose?

G. S. FRASER

The Cambridge Review. June, 1949. *Bowes & Bowes.* 3*s.*

Within rather less than two years, *The Cambridge Review* has established itself as a monthly of the first importance in the discussion of ideas. Its seriousness is indicated by the article which has pride of place in the current issue, a review, in some 12,000 words, of Sir Walter Moberly's *The Crisis in the University*, by Mr. Michael Oakeshott. This is a first-rate article, witty, eloquent, hard-hitting, provocative, a most bracing corrective to sloppy thinking on a subject which appears to breed sloppy thought. There are also, besides the usual reviews of new books, interesting articles on "Samuel Smiles and the Gospel of Work," by Mr. Asa Briggs, a valuable footnote to nineteenth-century social history, and on the possibility of a new history of literary criticism, by Mr. E. M. W. Tillyard. Mr. Tillyard points out that the only history of criticism extant is still Saintsbury's and suggests the points of view from which a new history of criticism could be most usefully written.

The Penguin Scores. *Mozart:* Symphony in G minor No. 40. *Bach:* Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G. *Beethoven:* Coriolan and Egmont Overtures (together). 2*s.* 6*d.* each.

These three pleasant-looking miniature scores mark the beginning of yet another Penguin enterprise. Slightly lower in price than the corresponding volumes of previous series (Eulenberg, Philharmonia, Boosey and Hawkes, etc.), they differ from all these in several important respects. The introductory matter, both biographical and descriptive, is much longer and more carefully written (sometimes by Dr. Gordon Jacob, who is the General Editor of the series); the paper covers are attractively designed in the Italian style, each one in a different pattern and different colours; and the shape is oblong instead of the familiar upright (5½in. in height and 7¾in. in width). The object of this last change is presumably to enable more bars to be printed on a single page; and in a rapid movement, where the reader who is following a performance is constantly obliged to turn over, this is a real gain. The corresponding disadvantage is a reduction in the number of staves that can be accommodated on the page; the *Egmont* Overture, which occupies thirteen staves, would appear to be about the maximum. A publisher's note implies the intention of adhering to a uniform size in future issues; in that case more elaborate scores can be included only by printing them the other way up—which may introduce other complications. Would it not be a good idea to take the opportunity, when engraving further scores, to print the real sounds made by the various "transposing instruments"? To concert-goers and amateurs, for whom these scores are planned, the transpositions are a needless complication of a task already quite difficult enough.

Week-end Competitions

No. 1,011

Set by Gerald Giradot

The usual prizes are offered for the opening 200 words of the sort of autobiography you most dislike. Entries by July 12th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,008

Set by Richard Lister

The usual prizes are offered for a four-line epigram in rhyming verse on the Old English Inn buffet cars coming into service with British Railways.

Report by Richard Lister

But what would be the alternative? Forward to pink and black plastic with strip lighting? Back to chromium? Fashionable, with decorator's Regency? A glance over the shoulder to Mrs. Maugham's off-white? Beaton's Edwardian? Ruskinian Gothic? It is a difficult problem for a generation without a style. But perhaps Tudor is the stalest of all furnishers' fantasies.

Competitors responded with great spirit and there was the usual difficulty with so many entries in deciding the prizes. I asterisk nine winners from among the twenty-three printed and award them 18*s.* each.

The public, it would seem, prefers its gin
Served in a pseudo-Tudor travelling inn;
Ev'n "lodging turns" maybe would cause less grouse
In a revived Victorian lodging-house.

GUY KENDALL

Men once could give an honest drink,
In honest buffets, to a crony;
But will they do so now, d'you think,
When both the beer and beams are phoney?

HACKPEN

*O come the magic journey
On the two-way single track!
The engine drags you forward
While the buffet takes you back.

P. F. W.

No more the English drunkard makes the rolling
English road ;
Such alcoholic energy is not the modern mode,
From Kensal Green to Aberdeen he sips his beer
and gin,
The rolling English drunkard in the rolling
English inn. E. HUDSON

*Odd that the nausea one feels
To see a bogus pub on wheels
One also feels to see, I find,
A stationary inn stream-lined. R. D. C.

The speed of British trains we all
At times have likened to a crawl,
But never thought we'd have to sub-
sequently add the prefix pub-.
J. P. MARRIOTT

In Ye Olde Rollinge Inne I sitte
And drayne a stouppe of Ginne and Itte,
Whyle Ye Olde Englishe Wyreless plays
As in Ye Merrie Monarch's days.
ROBERT GAFFIKIN

The Old World buffet cars on British Railways
Suggest that some designers aren't " in touch."
The cultivated few abhor such stale ways,
The masses don't mind where they guzzle (much).
DIABLOTIN

*The streamlined flier pulls a Tudor pub,
And passengers may like it or condemn it,
But most explain it, while their eyes they rub,
As a new fantasy by Mr. Emmet.
P. GORHAM

Blame not, my friend, in too much haste,
These Railway Inns for lack of taste :
Some connoisseurs might deem it good
That Dining-cars should match the food.
L. E. J.

*Mock on, Picasso-ite Pervert,
But we have in our pocket
A plan, by Munnings, to insert
A diesel in the Rocket.
FRANK PAVRY

*If passengers drink deeper
In Gothic pubs, why not
A first class " Queen Anne " sleeper,
And third class " Crofter's Cot " ?
R. HEMINGTON

The stout chief waiter in the dining car
Looked miserable, I thought, in ruff and tights
To sounds of Greensleeves coming from the bar
I munched a Chelsea bun beneath the candle-
lights. J. RAYMOND MAJER

*Pass right along the car, please, all who yearn
For Tea-Shoppe Jacobethan at its prime ;
Here, travellers, you can take a cheap return
Down the synthetic corridors of Time.
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Runs back through time, though rushing on
through space,
The Flying Inn, by G.K.C. narrated ;
John Barleycorn sly winks at Boniface :
" Mine host, thou art translated ! "
J. W. MARRIOTT

By Clio caught, and Man's improving schemes,
A patriot Briton hails the Welfare State ;
Though beef be off, his eyes can feast on beams
And pretty Tudor patterns on the plate.
J. R. TILL

Old English fare was high when life was rural,
Barons of beef, strong beer, creamed apple pie ;
And still it is (though we have made it plural)—
Meat may be scarce, drink thin, but fares are
high. PITHECUS

*" Romance brings up the nine-fifteen " :
But would that thought have struck the writer
If in the darkness he had seen
The nine-fifteen bring up the *Mitre* ?
GOODWILL

To the barmaid in the buffet car an English
yeoman throws
A Birmingham-exported imitation Tudor rose ;
A dozen Social Consciences are calling out for
mead,
But the spirit of old Falstaff is a-foaming to be
freed. J. R. TILL

Little Miss Muffet sat in this buffet,
While through Old England it ran.
It didn't elude her the buffet was Tudor,
But the beer xviijd for a can.
C. J. G.

*Contempt may greet these buffets with a buffet.
Yet will they not pursue historic courses ?
If pastry goes the iron way, then puff it ?
And make their pies to match their iron horses ?
G. J. BLUNDELL

Reactionary Private Enterprise
Passed off as new their antique buns and pies ;
Progressive British Railways, just as bold,
Dress up their modern taverns as *Ye Olde !*
H. A. C. EVANS

*For Railway Gothic Scott avowed
No sentiment of pudor.
Would even he have felt so proud
Of Locomotive Tudor ?
R. J. P. HEWISON

CHESS : The Spirit of an Opening

ONCE they are aware of the voluminous (and steadily growing) literature on opening theory, most beginners wonder if a reasonable degree of proficiency depends on their learning all about that multitude of " variations." Certainly not. Some of the greatest masters—Lasker and Capablanca among them—were admittedly (and deliberately) averse to excessive " book knowledge," and while others, notably Euwe and some of the Russians, may be veritable walking encyclopædias of opening theory even they cannot know every variation by heart. What matters is to be acquainted with the spirit of an opening and its fundamental principles.

Consistency is the main general principle. It seems a truism, yet it is often ignored, that once one has embarked on a gambit one must throw timidity to the wind and treat the opening aggressively, at any rate as long as the opponent has not decided, by means of some counter-sacrificial gambit, to change the material aspect and thereby to reverse the " spiritual " outlook.

The same principle of adjusting the " spirit " to the respective material aspects may well apply where no immediate material sacrifice is involved. Wherever early exchanges in the opening produce a favourable pawn-structure—may be a pawn majority on one wing or only a potential " distant passed pawn "—one will obviously strive to bring about further exchanges and the end-game as soon as possible ; but as for the opponent, the " spirit of the opening " will force him to play aggressively, with the minimum objective of rectifying his unfavourable pawn structure.

Common sense rather than the most rudimentary book knowledge will tell you that in most Q.P. openings and related set-ups, like the English and certain variations of the Sicilian and the Caro-Kann, the White KB, unless fianchettoed, " belongs " at Q3, and that just as obviously its place in the Giuoco Piano and related openings is at QB4.

Common sense too, rather than the study of innumerable known variations, can be applied to the famous Colle system of the Q.P. opening where White temporarily shuts in his QB by P-K3, although what with P-QB3 being another early feature of the system (necessary to support the centre) he will not fianchetto that Bishop. All one really has to know about the system is the simple basic idea that the KP is to be pushed on to his 4th with more lasting effect and only after due preparation by such obvious moves as B-Q3, Kt-Q2 and possibly Q-B2.

Another " variation " with a very clear-cut basic idea is the good old Tarrasch-defence in the Q. Gambit declined. [(1) P-Q4, P-Q4, (2) P-QB4, P-K3, (3) Kt-QB3, P-QB4.] This generally leads to the isolation of the Black QP, and since Rubinstein conceived a powerful White set-up against it, with the Rooks doubled on the Q-file and the KB fianchettoed to add to the pressure against the isolated Black QP, the variation has gone a little out of fashion. Yet, it is still quite feasible to consider the isolated QP a source of strength no less than of weakness. At any rate, so long as one knows the basic idea and develops one's pieces accordingly one will be quite safe without having ever passed more than a fleeting glance at the many pages of analytical literature existing on that one variation.

To come from the general to the specific, and to certain moves vital in certain conditions, remember our old friend Snatch and how his failure to defend the Danish Gambit was largely due to his omission to play the counter-sacrificial P-Q4 as early as possible. The same counter-sacrificial move is no less urgent (and, indeed, vital) for Black in the early opening stages of various White Gambits, particularly in most variations of the King's Gambit accepted.

The best example of an opening move, so vital that its omission would be a deadly sin against the spirit of the opening, is the early necessity for Black to play P-QB4 in almost all the " closed " variations of the French Defence. After (1) P-K4, P-K3, (2) P-Q4, P-Q4, (3) Kt-QB3, Kt-KB3, (4) B-KKt5, B-K2, (5) P-K5, KKt-Q2, (6) B x B, Q x B ——, however White continues, Black, as soon as possible, will have to play that "key-move" P-QB4, so as to keep up the tension in the Centre and thereby to save himself from strangulation. Omit the move, put the Black QKt at B3 and see if the mere sight of the position doesn't give you the nauseating feeling of claustrophobia-cum-suffocation. If it does, you have grasped the spirit of that opening.

Try this out by continuing an imaginary game (or by providing a real experience if you happened to have it), in which Black is guilty of no serious blunder except the omission of P-QB4. You should not need to proceed much beyond the 15th move, in order to prove that Black, while perhaps not quite ready yet to resign, is in a hopelessly cramped and inferior position. You should then merely indicate the simplest way for White to turn his positional advantage to decisive account. A guinea chessbook token for the most plausible illustration. Half-guinea consolation prize. Entries by July 11th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 4

Several competitors, including B. Biram and H. Ainsworth, gave interesting examples from master practice of apparently won positions thrown away by the oversight of some hidden resource. These are examples of over-confidence as a psychological factor, but they fail in this competition because they do not show it to have been decisive. Alfred Lidster provides a thorough analysis of one of the many examples (Tarrasch-Lasker, Düsseldorf 1908) of Lasker " playing the man rather than the board." This interesting entry, as well as H. Rowson's, fails to qualify because it merely re-emphasises the original example of Lasker's psychological prowess in an uphill struggle. (Rowson, though, deserves and wins a consolation prize, because his vivid eye-witness account of Lasker's celebrated " Marathon " against his namesake Edward at New York in 1924 will be used in some other context subsequently.)

The 1st prize is divided between Dr. H. P. Fox and J. D. Solomon, both of whom provide games in which they deliberately saddled their opponents with psychologically unwelcome problems. Playing Black against Koenig (in a simultaneous performance), Dr. Fox, after (1) P-Q4, P-Q4 (2) P-QB4 deliberately made the shockingly bad move Kt-KB3 ; but after (3) P x P he did not retake with the Kt (which, of course, would have given White an immediate advantage with (4) P-K4). He played (3) . . . B-B4 and proceeded to worry his astute opponent with other unusual opening moves which, no doubt, he failed to cope with merely by being preoccupied with a good many other games.

F. M. Wolmer gives an amusing account of how, thirty-three years ago, in a " Best-out-of-three " decider of a Boy's Championship and " after two titanic struggles," he caught his youthful opponent in the " Fool's Mate," (i.e. in four moves). Not bad psychology for an 11-year-old ! ASSIAC.